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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

GIRLS, GUIDING AND THE OUTDOORS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

BY

CATRIN SIAN THOMAS

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT STUDIES

Edmonton, Alberta

SPRING, 1994

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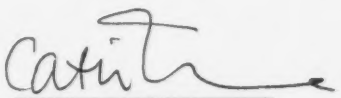

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Date: December 8, 1993.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of twenty women who were Girl Guides in their teenage years. The primary focus is on how the outdoor experiences of Guiding have influenced women in their later years.

Guiding experiences inspired an interaction in the outdoor world that was often emotional rather than physical. Guiding encouraged women to interact with the outdoor world in an appreciatory and emotive manner, and to incorporate this interaction with the outdoors into their lifestyle. Participation in the outdoor world was defined as a fun and social occasion in the primitive outdoor environment, and this very much reflected how women pursued later activity. The meanings ascribed to the outdoor world were highly subjective, and were a significant factor in the decision whether to continue participation or not.

The long-term experiences developed a level of competence which was instrumental in the enhancing of self-confidence and esteem. The social environment of the camp enhanced women's social skills, and the common allegiance to the organization was a factor in nurturing "special" childhood relationships. In a retrospective sense, nostalgia was an important factor, representing an abstract, yet powerful image of the early experiences.

Adult leadership provided women with a site to undertake activity, and acknowledged expertise via the certification process. The social network of Guide leaders provided access to other women with an interest in the outdoors, and opened up an avenue of participation that existed beyond both the family sphere and Guiding. The network also represented an agency of support and inspired lifelong friendships.

One of the most informative factors of this study relates to the single-sex nature of the experiences, and the manner in which this was regarded as a crucial aspect of the organization. Across the generations, women stressed that they would not have participated in the outdoor component if it had been a co-ed environment. The "girls only" environment nurtured competence and self-confidence, providing the time and space to succeed.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

> "One of the ripping things about Girl Guide work is the camp life." (Baden-Powell, 1918, p.112)

Since the introduction of Guiding to Canada in 1910, the Girl Guides of Canada have seen considerable expansion to become the largest organization for girls and women in the country. Boasting a youth membership of 215,637 in 1992, the movement services close to 10 percent of girls within the 5-17 age group. (Varpolatai, in press). In addition, various leadership roles are provided by the assistance of over 46,000 adult women, whose time is given on a voluntary basis. Unlike other youth organizations, the Girl Guides of Canada are unique by virtue of the fact that all levels of the organization are entirely female, a policy that also applies to most supplementary staff or instructors used on a temporary basis (Girl Guides of Canada, 1992).

My interest in the Girl Guides derives primarily from their commitment to outdoor activities:

> Outdoor activities, including camping, provide opportunities for fun, adventure and challenge; create a love of a healthy outdoor life, an appreciation of the beauty and wonder of nature; and promote environmental stewardship and sound conservation practices (Girl Guides of Canada, 1992, p.3).

From the first camp, held by the 1st Toronto Company in 1911, to "Guelph '93", a World Camp involving 3,000 participants with visitors from over 40 nations (Clark, 1992), camping has consistently been recognised as one of the fundamental components of the Guide program. The statement "Camping is Guiding!" (Girl Guides of Canada, 1992a, p.55) bears testimony to this emphasis.

The new Guide program initiated in September 1992 has introduced a series of Camping Emblems which represent a dominant feature of the program's goals. The foundation of the program is a core syllabus of three "Challenge Levels" which correspond to the three years that are spent in Guides. Each level is subdivided into four "Pathways": my community, my outdoor environment, my horizons, and my future. These challenge levels and pathways are experienced by all girls during their time in the Guide program. The outdoor environment pathways cover a wide range of outdoor experiences and skills, with units such as "Discovering Nature", "Camping and Outdoor Skills" and "Hike Leader" reflecting the emphasis placed on outdoor living skills and environmental awareness. In addition to these pathways, the Camping Emblems have been "structured so that at each level girls can learn new skills, while building on those they already have" (Girl Guides of Canada, 1992, p.55). These Camping Emblems act as an optional supplement to the

Challenge Levels, and have been developed from the recognition that: "Camping is one of the most exciting parts of Guiding. It is one of the reasons girls remain in Guides" (p.55). Work towards the Camping Emblems is dictated by girls' personal desires to develop and extend their outdoor knowledge.

With this emphasis upon experiential education in the outdoor environment, the Guide program reflects many of the positive attributes assigned to outdoor education:

> The program...provides challenging activities appropriate to the age and experience of each girl. It fosters creativity and a wide variety of interests. It promotes physical and emotional fitness, growth in initiative, self-reliance, resourcefulness, self-discipline and the development of personal values. (Girl Guides of Canada, 1992, p.2)

Whilst these ideals have parallels within other educational organizations, the Girl Guides are unique in the sense that they practise as an exclusively female organization. Within this context, they provide an interesting group for research particularly as outdoor education represents a domain that is often male controlled and dominated. From my personal experience, encouraging girls to participate in outdoor education has been one of the consistent battles working in the field; minimal female representation has been experienced at both the instructional and participatory level.

The size of the Guiding organization allows for the outdoors to be experienced by an enormous number of teenage girls. Potentially, the outdoor component of Guiding will encourage girls and women to maintain an active interest in the outdoors, as well as influence areas of their personal lives beyond the realm of the outdoors. If positive developments such are these are evidenced, then the approach used by Guiding could be adopted by other agencies within the outdoor field in order to encourage girls' participation and to maximize the benefits of their experience.

Aim of the Study

The central aim of this study was to determine the influence that the outdoor component of Guiding had, and continues to have, on the lives of former Girl Guides. The nature of such influence was broadly categorized into two domains:

1. Sustained Participation: the extent to which women were encouraged to maintain a level of participation in the outdoors as a result of their Guiding experience;

2. The Personal: the impact on personal and social development, and the extent to which such influences carried over into other arenas of life experience.

The focus on sustained participation examined the extent to which women have been active in the outdoors since their Guiding experiences. In order to gain an insight into the nature of these experiences, I explored: how often and with whom, camping and other outdoor activities were experienced. My aim was to establish whether or not Guiding outdoor experiences encouraged participation at a later stage. Positive results would suggest

that elements of the approach adopted by the Girl Guides could be applied to other agencies operating in the outdoor field in order to encourage female participation.

An analysis of the influence on the personal was somewhat more complicated, yet represented an invaluable source of data. An understanding of the extent to which Guiding has a long-term influence on women's lives provides a basis for establishing the fundamental rationale behind the outdoor experience. If there are positive influences, this would justify the desire to encourage female participation and legitimate this aim.

My analysis of the two domains of influence was achieved through the consideration of four basic questions:

1. What was the extent of women's outdoor participation since leaving the Guides?

2. What was the nature of the participation?

3. Was this participation directly influenced by the Guiding experience?

4. Was the Guiding experience influential beyond the realm of outdoor participation? If it was influential, how did it affect women's lives?

Although very broad, these questions sought to establish the basic realms of the outdoor experience of Guiding that proved to be influential in women's lives.

Analysis of Themes

A secondary aim of this study was to analyze three themes related to the Guiding experience which may have a significant impact on women's aspirations and participation in the outdoor field. These were constructed on the basis of my experience within mainstream outdoor education which differed in numerous respects to the Guiding experience:

1) A large proportion of my experience was co-educational. My experiences consistently showed a significantly lower proportion of girls and women at both participatory and instructional levels.

2) The drop-out rate of girls in outdoor programs was very high during long-term projects, an issue specific to girls in both co-ed and single-sex groups. Furthermore, girls' participation in the outdoors was seldom maintained beyond the scope of experiences provided through formal instruction despite efforts to encourage such a progression, including the provision of resources.

3) My experience in mainstream outdoor education involved a significant skills component. Camping was regarded as a subsidiary component of the experience, rather than a foundation from which further experiences were developed. A dominant focus lay upon the technical skills of the activities, with success and aspirations being based to a great extent upon the challenges presented by specific "adventure" activities.

4) My outdoor qualifications were gained in an environment that had a majority of male participants and assessors. Furthermore, my position as an instructor was gained predominantly through the evidence of qualifications that had a specific "hard skills" emphasis.

The three themes that were constructed on the basis of my experience are: dimensions of experience and aspiration, leadership and certification, and the female factor.

Dimensions of experience and aspiration

My aim was to identify the realms of outdoor experience in which women felt comfortable to participate. I was also interested in analyzing the extent to which women's aspirations extended beyond the level of their Guiding experience. This was answered via the following questions:

1. What did women feel they could achieve in the outdoor world? Did they have any aspirations inspired by their Guiding experiences? Was there a limit to the nature of experiences that they were prepared to undertake?

2. Did visions of potential differ through the different generations of Guides. If so, did such visions reflect the attitudes of the time?

3. If there was a perceived threshold to the extent of participation, how influential was Guiding in expanding or defining the limits to this threshold?

4. If a threshold existed, to whom did the domain beyond belong, and why was this considered so?

The questions provided an insight into how Guiding limited or inspired women's aspirations for different outdoor experiences.

Leadership and certification

This theme incorporated two spheres. The first related to leadership and certification as it was experienced at the individual level. I examined whether leadership roles at camp, and/or camping badges and certificates had any influence in encouraging women's participation in their teens as well as in later life. I was also interested in discovering how these factors affected women at a personal level.

The second sphere related directly to the influence of female leadership in terms of "role models". This analyzed the extent to which female leaders were seen as an influential element of the Guiding experience. My interest lay in discovering if leaders were instrumental in encouraging participation, and how they were perceived within the outdoor field. This is an important issue, bearing in my personal experience in mainstream outdoor education, where female leaders were in the minority.

The female factor

This refers to a retrospective view which assessed the impact of the single-sex environment. This revolved around the following questions:

1. In retrospect, would women have participated in the outdoor component, had it not been within a single-sex environment?

2. Had subsequent participation been with predominantly all-female groups?

3. Did co-ed experiences differ from the Guiding experience and affect the quality of the experience?

My aim was to ascertain how the single-sex environment influenced the nature of participation, as well as the extent to which this determined the nature of subsequent experiences.

The central and secondary aims sought to discover the influential elements of the outdoor component of Guiding. Whilst the central aim incorporated a broad focus, the themes directed attention to specific elements that made the Guiding experience distinctive. My intention in analyzing these specific areas was to provide an insight into the nature of the Guiding outdoor experiences, and assess the extent to which this program encouraged women to maintain a level of participation. Through the analysis of these areas, I hoped to gain some useful information which could be applied to the outdoor education world where girls and women often represent the minority.

Plan of the Thesis

The chapters are organized in the following manner. Chapter 2 provides a background to the study, including an overview of the organization, and the place of Guiding in scholarship. Chapter 3 provides details of the methodology and is followed in Chapter 4 by a description of the research participants. Chapters 5 and 6 present the research findings. Chapter 5 concentrates on how the Guiding experiences encouraged participation, were influential at a personal level, and the extent to which the experiences were encouraging or limiting. Chapter 6 explores the issues of leadership and certification, and concludes with a discussion of the single-sex factor. Chapter 7 provides a summary of the research, its implications, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of the organization, and look at how Guiding and women's participation in the outdoor world have been addressed in academic scholarship. I conclude by addressing the issue of female leadership, and how this is affected by the recent challenges to the organization which have forced it to address its position from a political, and potentially a feminist standpoint.

The Organization

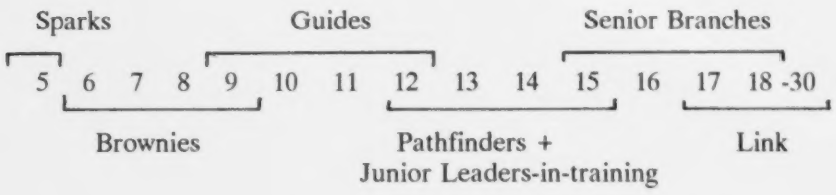
In 1909, Nesta Maud Ashworth and Rotha Ormon "gatecrashed" a Boy Scout rally in Crystal Palace, England. When Baden-Powell questioned "What are you?", the girls replied: "We're the Girl Scouts". In response to this enthusiasm, Baden-Powell promptly produced a pamphlet outlining a system of training for girls, and handed the leadership of the new organization, Girl "Guiding" over to his sister Agnes Baden-Powell (Robinson, 1985). And so the Girl Guides were born. Two months after the Crystal Palace rally, Guiding made its way to Canada:

> Mrs A.H. Malcolmson, an energetic matron from St. Catherines, Ont., corralled a group of her friends' children in a basement under a local beer parlour and formed them into the first company in Canada. She togged them out in identical middies and straw skimmers, armed them with staves and took them off for nature tramps along the banks of the old Welland Canal (Moon, 1957, p.58)

Since its inception over eighty years ago, the aim of the Girl Guides of Canada to "help girls and young women become responsible citizens" (Girl Guides of Canada, 1992, p.2) has changed very little. Working to a philosophy that adheres to the Guide Promise and Law, girls and women experience an informal education that incorporates physical, emotional, spiritual and moral development. Through opportunities for adventure, service, and leadership, girls can develop "a sense of well-being and self-esteem" (ibid.) within an encouraging environment. The organization is non-denominational, and has up until very recently identified itself as non-political. Recent challenges to the organization have changed this latter policy and will be discussed later.

The present day structure of the organization incorporates a variety of "units" which cater for girls from the ages of 5 to 17, as outlined overleaf:

Figure 1: Age Groups in Guiding



The Senior branches include Rangers, Cadets and Junior Leaders. Link is provided for women who wish to maintain contact with the organization, but are unable to commit to regular meetings. Although there is no formal program, a Link group within a district may design a program to suit its needs.

The units are supervised by adults known as Guiders. In the younger branches (Sparks, Brownies, Guides, Pathfinders), there are two Guiders, and their presence is required for all parts of the program. The input of Guiders decreases in the senior branches, where girls' have a greater input and control of the unit's activities.

The leadership structure for girls starts early in the organization. In Guides, each company is divided into patrols of six girls. Each patrol elects a patrol leader and a patrol second. The patrol leader is responsible for patrol matters, and represents the communication link between the patrol and the Guiders. Progressing through Pathfinders and into the senior branches, girls are given more control over the unit's activities. By the time they arrive in Rangers, girls are completely responsible for the program and administration of the unit; the Guiders are present in an advisory capacity.

The organizational structure provides the opportunity for girls and women to gain leadership experience within a safe environment. Reaching over eight million girls worldwide, this "leisure organization with a purpose" (Varpolatai, 1992) offers a significant contribution to youth activity and opportunity.

Guiding and Scholarship

As the title of my study suggests, my interests include girls, Guiding, and the outdoors, and specifically, the relationship between Guiding and the outdoors. Prior to this study, my background knowledge of Guiding was minimal. My assumptions of the organization, many of which were admittedly unflattering, were very much shaped by the media portrayal of the organization to which I was exposed throughout my life. My assumptions regarding Guides and the outdoors were similar to the current negative media portrayal. With the recent move of the Boy Scouts to co-ed in November 1992, much media attention has centred around the assumption that Scouting offers more exciting and challenging outdoor activities than Guiding. An example is provided of a girl called Michelle, who left Brownies to join the Scouts: "...we go to winter camps and we do ice fishing, and in Brownies we didn't do any of that" (Howell, 1992, p.B1). The assumption is that "...the Guide program is often weak when it comes to outdoor activities. Guide policies are interpreted in an overly protective manner and leaders often are not adventuresome program planners" (Calgary Herald, December 24, 1991, p.A6).

This portrayal of Guiding, as lacking the spice of challenging activities, has seen two basic responses. The first is a defensive statement acknowledging that Guides are also "...doing interesting and exciting activities, including winter camping and ice fishing" (Walker, 1992, p.A9). The second response regarding the outdoor experience is well articulated by Ford (1991):

> The point...isn't to turn your child into Mark Trail. Nobody graduates from Scouts or Guides as a fully fledged forest ranger...[The point is] not to teach them the finer points of camping or what moss on the side of the tree is edible and which is a direction finder. The point is to teach them self-reliance, self-esteem and self-worth. It is the doing - not the deed - that is important (p.A4).

The broader issue of this media dialogue is how the media often presents an inaccurate portrayal of Guiding. The goals of the organization are ignored or misunderstood, providing readers such as myself with a complete misunderstanding of what Guiding is about.

Despite my interests as a feminist within outdoor education and outdoor recreation, I had at no point come across positive images of Guiding. Whilst the media images were instrumental in shaping my opinions, my search into the academic literature proved that there is hardly any scholarship which could provide a more informed account of Guiding. Guiding appeared to be absent in scholarship across a variety of areas; feminist research, outdoor education and recreation, women's participation in the outdoors, and mainstream sociology, to name but a few. There is almost no substantive research to indicate what exactly Guiding is about, and often, the available information is not particularly informative. As an example, Springhall's (1977) account of British youth movements allocates an appendix of four pages to describe "girls in uniform". Despite the fact that at that time, one in four girls in the country belonged to Brownies, and an estimated sixty percent of British women had been in Guiding at some point in their lives, the organization's contribution to the country's youth was summarised in a page and a half (p.131). This almost trivializes the impact that Guiding has had in Britain.

Whilst the primary aim of Guiding has been to offer opportunities to girls and women, it is not perceived to be a feminist organization, nor would it claim to be. However, its goals to provide a safe space and learning opportunities for girls and women have many parallels in the contemporary women's movement (Varpolatai, in press). Despite these "feminist" goals, Guiding has been ignored by feminist scholarship which is a reflection of the failure of the women's movement to be more inclusive towards its more traditional sisters.

The sole source of Canadian research of which I am aware has been that carried out by Varpolatai (1992, and in press) who has studied the organization from a feminist perspective. Her works include an analysis of the "socialization, education and everyday lives of girls and women from the perspective of a single-sex organization committed to the development of girls and women" (1992, p.116), and a discussion of the politicization of the organization "in response to legal and other challenges to its membership policy" (in press, p.1). Her work provides an insight into the importance of the organization because of its commitment to girls and women, the impact it has on its members, and the political questions raised through legal challenges. Unlike the few pieces of research carried out in the United States that refer to Girl Scouts (Auster, 1985; Palmer, 1977; Vosburgh, Kelly and Strasser, 1990), Varpolatai provides accounts of girls and women's experiences in the

organization. She has made a very important step forward in starting to analyze what it means to be a Girl Guide.

The majority of accessible information referring to the Girl Guides of Canada comes from sources within the organization. National and provincial magazines, Guide handbooks, policy documents, plus archival material provide an outline of Guiding from both historical and present day perspectives. These do not however, provide critical analyses of the long-term influence of Guiding, or an insight into the nature of outdoor experiences beyond the descriptive level.

The emphasis placed upon self-development through the outdoors is by no means exclusive to Guiding; contemporary outdoor education and the organized camping movement both share this focus. Despite this common ground, the extensive outdoor education and recreation literature ignores Guiding completely. Similarly, Guiding is paid little attention in the organized camping literature, although historically, both movements had similar origins. Whilst the bodies of outdoor literature are quite different, their connection to various aspects of the outdoors, be that education, adventure or outdoor living, all have connections to the Guiding experiences, yet fail to acknowledge the organization's presence.

The participation of girls and women in the outdoor world has inspired some research in the past decade, and this has played an important role in acknowledging that gender issues need to be addressed. Research focusing on girls' and women's outdoor experiences has been carried out in the United States (c.f. Henderson and Bialeschki, 1986, 1987; Yerkes and Miranda, 1985; Miranda and Yerkes, 1987) and in Britain (Green, 1987; Humberstone, 1986, 1987, 1990; Humberstone and Lynch, 1990). The American research concentrates on the impact of short, one-off, women-only outdoor recreational experiences. The British research focusses on girls' experiences in both recreational and educational settings. The work by Humberstone (1986, 1987, 1990) investigates co-ed outdoor education experiences at a British outdoor pursuits centre. She provides some useful information to demonstrate how outdoor education can benefit both girls and boys in the mixed setting, although her work concentrates on the adventure pursuits which are traditionally male-dominated. Green's (1987) work is probably the most akin to the Guiding experience, because she investigates the provision of single-sex activities at a water sports centre. The experiences were recreational, and participation was often voluntary. Her study identified some of the structural barriers to girls' participation, and the methods used to overcome them.

Although conclusions from this research acknowledge the positive benefits of outdoor experiences, generalizing to the Guiding experience is difficult for a variety of reasons. First, the emphasis placed by Guiding on camping and outdoor living skills as the foundation of the outdoor experience signifies this difference; these are usually subsidiary components of the outdoor experience, rather than the focus. Technical skills and adventure activities, which have been traditionally male dominated, may be experienced in many Guide camps; however, these represent supplementary items to the core agenda of outdoor living.

Second, none of the research investigates the long-term impact of the experiences. Although the empowering nature of the outdoor experience is a feature identified by most of the research (e.g., Henderson and Bialeschki, 1986; Mitten, 1992), the long-term impact of this is not assessed. This long-term perspective is an interesting omission in the research in view of the fact that personal and social development remains at the core of the experience, the real benefits of which, particularly the social, cannot be determined solely through immediate or short term analysis.

Third, in terms of a retrospective view, the tendency is to evaluate short-term, one-off experiences. Guiding is quite different in this respect because the commitment to the organization is often long-term, spanning a significant number of years. This has implications for the relationships between Guides and leaders, and the familiarity with the outdoor world to name but a few issues.

These factors that differentiate Guiding from other experiences make the existing research difficult to use in trying to theorize the Guiding outdoor experience. Other than the work by Varpolatai, the meaning of the Guiding experience is absent in the areas of research that might potentially incorporate it. This accentuates the "exploratory" directions that my research has had to take.

On the basis that Guiding is the largest movement for girls and women in the world, has had an eighty-three year commitment to the outdoors, and is potentially a major socializing force for almost ten percent of the female teenage population in Canada, its absence in feminist, sociological, outdoor education and recreation literature can only be described as astounding.

Historical Antecedents

> In the Victorian world, Guiding, which encouraged a girl to think for herself, to be prepared for effective action in all circumstances and to develop a love for camping and the outdoors, was considered eccentric by some, and by a few to be an organization no nice girl would join (Robinson, 1985, p.5).

From its inception at the turn of the century, Guiding provided opportunities for girls, which although bound within a fairly conservative ideology, ventured against the conservative norm of the time (Varpolatai, in press). Parents objected to Guiding, complaining that a girl "could not be a lady and a Guide". In response, the organization argued that the often non-conventional activities were a positive factor of the experiences, which ultimately created a "better" wife (Robinson, 1985). Guiding aimed to "...get girls to learn how to be women...capable of keeping good homes and bringing up good children" (Baden-Powell, 1912, p.viii), whilst also encouraging them to be self-reliant and resourceful. The goals reflected a set of images of women as both independent and subservient; the underlying aims of the movement were progressive, although assuming the inevitability of the role of wife and mother[1]. The prevailing images mirrored those of physical educators who determined that "a fit body would enhance the development of a fit mind, and consequently a fit mother" (Scraton, 1986, p.73). The aims were both a challenge to, and adherence to, the dominant ideologies.

Within parents' concerns, the active part of the program, namely camping, lay at the root of the criticisms. Despite this, camping was a major component of the Guiding experience and has remained so throughout its history. The first Canadian Guide camp was

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[1] It should be noted that the contradiction apparent in the early years that encouraged independence whilst retaining the homemaking ideal did not leave Guiding until 1976. In this year, the aim to create 'homemakers' was finally removed, leaving the primary aim "to help girls become responsible, resourceful and happy members of society" (Girl Guides of Canada, 1976, p.7) and using the outdoors as a fundamental means to achieve this.

held in the summer of 1911, when the 1st Toronto Company held a ten-day camp near the Credit river. "Mothers were so doubtful about the camp that they arrived daily to see their daughters (Girl Guides of Canada, 1949, p.2).

The commitment to the outdoors endured both world wars. During the first world war, Guide camps in Alberta adopted an association with the Army that was reflected in the camp activities. Drilling, first aid and athletics were part of the camp program, with judging for competitions carried out by Army officers. These activities were discontinued after the war in a response to public distaste regarding anything military. The second world war limited camp activities due to rationing, although short-stay camps were carried out during this period (Cormack, 1967).

Guide camps flourished throughout the 1920s and 1930s, as demonstrated by the activities within Alberta alone. Between 1930 and 1940 there were some thirty camps a year, providing experiences for some 740 girls (Thurston, 1992). Many of the Ranger companies were active, building permanent huts and shelters for weekend and holiday accommodation (Cormack, 1967). In 1936, the position of Camp Advisor was approved, as well as the development of the Camper's License and camp rules (Girl Guides of Canada, 1936). The first provincial Camp Advisor, Betty Martin, was appointed a year later in 1937.

From the 1940s through to the 1960s, the Policy, Organization and Rules indicate a constant emphasis on camping, increasing the focus to include swimming, boating and hiking (1945), developing a Camp Director's License (1953), and consistently upgrading and amending the various outdoor components. In 1957, the organization was preparing to host a camp for the World Association in Ontario which would include some "12,000 Guides from 38 countries...coming to spend eleven nights under canvas, and twelve days hiking, swimming, canoeing, romping.." (Moon, 1957, p.14). From these accounts, the outdoors still remained at the core of the Guiding experience. The outdoor component of Guiding has experienced ongoing revision up to the present day, although the camp remains the foundation of the experience.

In addition to camping, Guiding provided girls with opportunities for subsidised international travel. As early as 1923, Canadian Guides had the opportunity to travel to England to attend a world camp (Girl Guides of Canada, 1949). As members of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Canadian Guides are part of an international network which has provided access to group or individual opportunities over the last seventy years; opportunities that were often not available elsewhere.

The commitment that Guiding has had to camping and the outdoors, as well as providing opportunities for travel, are factors that have been present throughout its history. Despite this, Guiding does not appear in texts charting the historical presence of women in the outdoor world (c.f. Bialeschki, 1992; Miranda, 1987).

The Single-sex Organization and Leadership

Throughout its history, Guiding has maintained a position of exclusively female leadership. The training and leadership development are carried out internally, with change implemented and monitored from within. This is a unique situation which has sparked some debate due to a number of protests by men wishing to join the ranks of the leadership. Four men have challenged the Girl Guides of Canada in a move to be allowed to practice as Brownie leaders. One case before the Human Rights Commission in Nova Scotia was ruled in the Guides' favour (Sexton, 1991), "citing the exclusion of male members on bona fide

occupational grounds" (Varpolatai, 1992, p.119). In addition, the recent ruling by Scouts Canada to "go co-ed" has placed further pressure on the Girl Guides of Canada to legitimate their position as a single-sex organization. The media response to the recent move by the Scouts is very interesting in its own right, citing examples of girls who have thrown in their Brownie and Guide uniforms for the more exciting world of Scouting where you don't "...work on girl stuff", but play "rough" games, and are guaranteed to have "fun" (van Rijn, 1992, p.A4). The new Scout is "...not a tomboy by any means. She's still a girl", but to her peers, she's "another cub, not a girl" (Howell, 1992, p.B1).

The controversy over the single-sex status of the organization has forced the Girl Guides of Canada to examine its programs and necessitate change in order to protect its status; legal requirements dictate that as a single-sex organization, it must "develop a society where the disadvantaged have access to what the advantaged have" (Varpolatai, 1992, p.120). The challenges have forced the organization to make a critical and introspective investigation into its policies and role; a process of politicization that is well documented by Varpolatai (in press).

A response to the legal challenges is the argument that female leadership and "role modelling" are essential parts of Guiding in order that "girls...become aware that women do, in fact, hold positions of leadership quite capably" (Westerguard, 1992, p.B1). This emphasis on role modelling, and the importance of female leadership, is something that Guiding and some of the outdoor literature shares. The concept of female leadership in the outdoors has been the focus of several studies (Jordan, 1991; Miranda and Yerkes, 1987). Jordan (1991) provides data to show that perceived capabilities of outdoor leaders are based upon their gender, irrespective of ability. Female leaders are credited with the expressive and people oriented traits, whilst male leaders are acknowledged to possess the technical skills; these perceptions are congruent with traditional socially ascribed roles. Miranda and Yerkes (1987) provide an insight into women leaders' perceptions of their own role as outdoor educators. The results demonstrate that gender has a marked influence on women's careers, and on the perception of their roles. The implications of the gender influence varies among different women; however, one of the most significant results illustrates that female leaders feel that they encourage "more initiative and independence among women on trips" (p.19). The perceived position as "role model", "leader", "facilitator", or "guide" is dictated by personal preference, nevertheless, the outcome of this position is definitely seen as positive.

The necessity for positive female leadership is stressed in many studies (Green, 1987; Miranda & Yerkes, 1987; Humberstone, 1990; Jordan, 1991, 1992; Mitten 1992.), and also considered in a number of Guiding publications (Dennison, 1991; Girl Guides of Canada, 1992; Perkin, 1990). Other literature is unified in recognising the need for a leader who can maximize participant involvement in order to excite, encourage, motivate and empower, as well as offering a supportive position (Jordan, 1992). The actual influence of women in leadership positions, however, remains an area that has not been investigated in the available studies. The positive impact of female leadership is assumed, yet the attitudes of participants fail to be analyzed. This bears many similarities to the wealth of literature citing the necessity for "role models" in "non-traditional" fields which is unified in the adoption of what is basically an unchallenged assumption (Speizer, 1982).

Summary

My personal experience in the field in Britain, at both a recreational and professional level, indicates reduced levels of female participation. During my three years of teaching outdoor education, the number of girls participating was significantly lower than boys. Projects based on a 50:50 male/female ratio required considerable efforts to fill the female spaces whilst the number of males was always in excess. At a professional level, I was one of only two women in a year of seventeen to obtain a degree in Outdoor Education. At a recreational level, women's involvement in a walking/mountaineering club represented less than one third of the active members, and my mountaineering experiences in the Alps and in Scotland often caused heads to rotate at the surprise of seeing two women attached to a rope, devoid of male partners.

The intimidation, lack of confidence, reluctance to participate and preconceived images of the outdoor world that serve to inhibit female participation are components that have been recognised as significant factors during a large proportion of my teaching experience in Britain. Whether related to preconceived images of ability or of the activity, or associated with natural anxiety regarding self or peers, the "I can't do that" response aired by many girls proved to be one of the most disturbing facets of my occupation in the outdoors.

In contrast to these experiences, Guiding presents a different perspective to this issue, as the outdoor component is seen as one of the basic reasons for maintaining participation in the organization (Treloar, 1991; Varpolatai, 1992). This represents a positive experience for an enormous number of girls; a situation that does not appear to be reflected by mainstream outdoor education. Whilst the experiences are quite different, an analysis of the Guiding experiences can potentially provide an insight into the factors that encourage girls and women outdoors.

The available literature is united in the sense that girls and women's experiences in the outdoors are seen as a positive means to empower, enthuse and revitalise. There are differences in opinion regarding the nature of the experiences necessary to achieve these ends, nevertheless this fundamental goal remains unanimous.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Given the objective to document and analyze women's experiences, the research was undertaken utilizing methods that would allow for personal stories to be heard, to explore individual experiences, yet maintain some consistency in order to allow for a comparative analysis between participants.

The nature of this research suggested the use of qualitative techniques for the collection and analysis of data. Since this area of study has seen little formal enquiry, the approach was primarily exploratory with theory emerging from the data. Unlike the more traditional process of verifying predetermined hypotheses, "grounded theory" relies on a constant interaction with the data. From the examination and analysis of data through a system of constant comparison, hypotheses are generated throughout the research process (Stern, 1985). Working from the premise of "ignorance", the research follows a fluid, yet revealing process of discovery, with the goal of developing theory.

The emphasis on personal experience dictated an approach that was not bound by the constraints of data categorization, but encouraged the exploration of issues as they arose and with the flexibility to change direction should the data dictate. Inductive, exploratory and interpretive are all terms which identify the underlying foundations of such a research approach; however, the phrase "loose and highly emergent" most effectively depicts the nature of the research methodology for this study (Henderson, 1991, p.105).

Research Methods

The use of semi-structured interviews was the method chosen to gather information pertaining to women's experiences. As a "conversation with a purpose" (Berg, 1989, p.13), interviews provided access to general information about the participants, and a forum from which to explore both the nature of women's experiences and the motivations behind subsequent outdoor participation. The method also provided access to the abstract aspects of women's lives such as thoughts, ideas, meanings, and memories, and the personal interaction enabled "...opportunities for clarification and discussion" (Reinharz, 1992, p.18). Exploratory, explanatory and confirmatory practices encompassed within the interview process provided the ideal opportunity to digress, to hear the tales which were recognized as meaningful experiences, pursue such directions, and hence develop a level of understanding of what women felt in both a retrospective and present sense, regarding their outdoor experiences. The lived realities of women's outdoor experiences were determined, providing opportunities to gather and analyze data concurrently, as well as incorporating an ongoing process of verification in order to qualify developing theories.

Locating and Selecting Participants

The sample used for this research was created from "experts", whose domain of expertise was qualified by their experience as Girl Guides, Pathfinders, or Rangers for a period of time during their teenage years[2]. A variety of levels of participation were sought, including women whose participation ceased in their teens, as well as those who maintained links with the organization as adults, either working in administrative or leadership capacities. In addition, I was keen to locate women whose experiences within the organization would represent what Morse (1991) calls a "negative sample":

> Special sampling strategies are used in qualitative research to ensure that all sides of an issue are represented. This includes either the deliberate seeking out of negative experiences or seeking informants who had atypical experiences, bad experiences, or in some way a different experience (p.139).

Whilst limiting the research to women with specific "expertise", the search for such diversity was felt to be a positive means to enrich the data, and provide a broader understanding of the Guiding experiences. Alongside the search for women who had encountered "different" experiences, a major objective was to speak to women from different generations in order to provide an historical perspective that could be traced back to the early years of the movement. An additional aim was to include women from a wide variety of social backgrounds and lifestyles, although the predominantly white, middle-class nature of Guiding predetermined those responding to my calls for participation.

Requests for volunteers were placed in Gateway (student paper), in Folio (staff paper), in Caravan (the provincial Guiding magazine), in a local seniors home, and verbally through the Trekkers seniors' hiking group. Furthermore, personal contacts throughout the interview period allowed a "snowballing" effect, and proved to be particularly useful in terms of finding women whose situation or experiences would diversify the sample.

The response to the advertisements was overwhelming, with over sixty responses during the course of the research period. Upon initial contact, a brief summary of the research was provided, then if the individual was interested in participating, details of Guiding experiences, age, occupation, and family status were taken. In the instances where women had unusual circumstances or different experiences, I would arrange an interview during the first contact. In the majority of cases, I would decide whether or not to interview at a later stage, and participants would be informed shortly after.

The number of interviews carried out was determined by the nature of the data. Researchers in the field of qualitative research (Henderson, 1991; Morse, 1991; Spradley, 1979, 1980) advocate continuing research until a saturation point has been reached; a state at which no more new information arises from the interviews. Although this was my objective, I found that a saturation point seemed to be difficult to qualify, particularly since the experiences and feelings expressed were so vastly divergent. Closure of the interview process was thus defined once I felt that the common links in the experiences had been identified, and the regions I wished to pursue lay beyond the scope of this study. An

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[2] For the purposes of this study, experiences in the Brownies were not considered on the basis that the outdoor and camping experiences in which the girls are fully participatory do not occur until later involvement in the Guides.

unforseen problem of the interviews was that I was merely "scratching the surface". For each of my original research questions, there were substantially more generated, although these related to the broader Guiding context. I was thus hesitant to declare closure in a resolute manner, because I was left with more unanswered questions than I started.

Establishing Rapport

Interviews were carried out over a period of four and a half months. During this time, I spoke to twenty women. Approximately half of the interviews were carried out in a university setting, the other half in a location chosen by the respondent, such as her home or workplace. As much as possible, the interviews were arranged in an environment that would be uninterrupted, although in the case of workplaces, this proved to be difficult. For those participants who were parents, an arrangement was made to visit their home while the children were at school or elsewhere.

Although the interviews were formal, in the sense that they were prearranged, the discussions that took place were fairly informal and relaxed, what Taylor and Rupp (1991) describe as "structured conversations". Those interviews that took place in women's homes tended to be more social in the sense that cups of tea (sometimes prepared especially for the British researcher) and cake were served and consumed whilst having an informal chat. Photographs, magazine clippings and memorabilia related to the Guiding years were often shown as well as family photos or personal collections all of which assisted in creating a comfortable climate for the interview to take place.

The interviews lasted between one and five hours, although on average just under two hours. The sessions were initiated with an exchange of information in order to explain my reasons for doing the study, and my areas of interest. I was also able to answer any questions that were of concern or interest at this point. During this period, I was eager to disclose details of my personal background in order to provide some insight into my experiences, but more important, to establish rapport with the participant and demystify any feelings that they might have about "the researcher".

One of the most important factors prior to starting the interview, was the emphasis on women's participation by virtue of their expertise, and the implications of this in terms of the interview. I was eager to emphasize that it was their experiences that I was interested in hearing. Since I had no personal Guiding experience, they had the knowledge I sought, and thus, whatever they could remember, and any feelings they had about the organization or their experiences, were considered to be important. In order to accentuate this, it was always stressed that there were no right or wrong answers, that their personal experiences, feelings, opinions and so on were all of interest, and the major focus of the research. In this manner, I sought to accentuate how important their personal input was, in order to pave the way for as open and unrestricted a discussion as possible.

Interview Format

The main content of the interviews was structured around the themes outlined in the introductory chapter. Using what Henderson (1991, p.73) refers to as the "interview guide approach", there was some topic guidance in order to explore the predetermined themes. In an often circuitous manner, women would travel along the thematic paths directed by

my questions, although this was done in a manner that was as broad and as open as possible.

The initial stage of the interview was the most structured part of the session involving a period of straightforward questioning that elicited demographic information, brief personal histories, and a summary of the Guiding experiences. This approach allowed for women to settle into the conversation and become more comfortable over a period of time. I found this to be particularly important considering the often long term, and retrospective nature of many of the experiences, because it seemed to "jog" the memory banks. The questions were very broad, and were aimed at a general reflection of the Guiding years, gradually narrowing the focus in order to trigger as many memories as possible. Examples were: How long were you in Guiding? What are your strongest memories of those years? Is there any particular aspect of those Guiding years that stands out? What are your memories of the regular meetings? What are your memories of outdoor activities at camp and during the regular meetings? Through a series of descriptions of both distinct and vague memories, the early stages of the interviews encouraged as much involvement as possible, and in a safe, non-compromising fashion.

Another objective of the interviews was to encourage women not only to describe their experiences, but also to reflect upon the nature of those experiences and consider both present and future situations. Thus the initial descriptive and structural questions gave way to broader comparative and reflective questions, with additional hypothetical situations presented concerning current changes in the Guiding organization. This use of comparative and hypothetical questions, described as "contrast" questions by Spradley (1979), was a particularly useful method of generating information in that it provided an insight into each woman's social reality. For example, in trying to determine the impact of single-sex and co-ed situations, comparative questions provided a useful format from which women could gauge their own experiences and their reactions at a specific level (e.g., How can you compare your camping experiences in a single-sex group to those in a mixed group? How do you respond in these situations? Is your involvement similar in both situations? How do you feel about your reactions? Can you explain your reactions to different situations?).

Over the course of the interview period, I changed the structure of the interviews quite markedly. The core questions were reviewed after each interview, with the focus narrowing over the four months. Later interviews became more guided in the sense that a specific comparison or clarification of details from previous interviews was sought. The flexibility was still maintained, however, in order to glean information that would be unique to each participant, yet allowing for a consistency within the data that would enable comparison to previous participants.

Whilst the interview process was ongoing, the nature of each interview was ultimately defined by the extent to which the participant was willing to explore her experiences. In general, the majority of women were very keen to talk, with comments such as "once I get going, you can never stop me", and "I do like to talk to you young ones", being espoused as an apologetic, rather than a positive attribute. In these cases, my input was minimal, guiding the conversations if they went "off course", and prompting changes in direction where necessary. In contrast to these situations, there were a few women who were not as verbal; "I've always been quite shy", and "I've never been a great talker". In these instances, the style of interview had to be quite different in order to accommodate their reservations, and to encourage them to talk and respond as freely as possible. Flexibility of interview style was critical throughout the interview process, and was something I had to decide upon as the interview proceeded.

The interviews were undertaken as one-offs. This was felt to be an adequate amount

of interaction and is recommended if, to quote May (1991), "the topic can be covered readily in one contact and does not require substantial rapport and trust for exploration" (p.189). Provision was made for a second interview in the event that further explanations were sought, although the data generated were sufficient that such follow-ups were not required.

Data Collection

The interviews were all audio-taped. I felt that writing notes would not only limit my listening capacities, but could also prove to be a distraction for the participant. There were no objections to the tape-recorder, although some women were quite self-conscious at first, and it took some time before they were comfortable talking without being concerned about how it would sound on the recorder. An amusing scenario with one of the less confident women involved her commentary as a recitation, which, when she was not happy with what had been said asked "do you mind if I say that again?". This does provide an insight into how difficult it can be for individuals to talk to a machine on the table; however, I found that the novelty soon wore off, and once there was the confidence to make eye contact, the distracting emphasis of the recorder soon disappeared.

The complete conversations were taped except for certain excerpts which some women did not wish to have included usually because they incorporated a sensitive personal issue. Where possible, I made a point of recording the conversations beyond the conclusion of the interview, because the period after the end of the interview often prompted an interesting discussion. This period of time was most useful because the official "closure" often prompted flashbacks which were felt to be appropriate, or provided the space to air things that they wanted to say but were not considered to be relevant. During this period, more diverse comments were made that prompted some insightful debates. In one instance, I had a discussion about the single-sex nature of the organization, all of which was prompted by a flashback some twenty minutes after the interview had finished. In another, there were some scathing comments about the inclusion of girls into Scouting. Such conversations often provided an important indication of personal attitudes, and responses to facets of the organization, and as such, were a crucial part of the overall data.

In addition to taping the interviews, field notes were made immediately after each interview, noting information about the interview, as well as key points that I felt needed to be noted. The tape was then transcribed and further notes made during and after the transcribing process. Although, at times a long and tedious process, the transcribing proved to be one of the most important parts of the data analysis. This was significant in becoming familiar with the content of each interview, and deciding which direction to pursue in subsequent sessions.

Data Analysis

My method of analysis incorporated a system of coding all transcripts and field notes, and then analyzing and comparing the contents of each code. Each code represented a theme that arose from the interviews, and was usually a paragraph of information. Using the word processor, I created a file for each code, into which any text that related to that code was appended (see Appendix 1). The result was a system of files which stored text

from every interview that made reference to a particular theme.

The second phase of analysis incorporated a method of reduction and comparison. Each code was analyzed on its own for patterns or commonalities. Using this system, the codes were reduced to a series of sub-themes which identified the dominant characteristics of each theme. For some codes, the process was simple because there were few common elements. For others such as personal outdoor experiences, the sub-themes were broken down into a secondary set of sub-themes and so on until patterns of experience were identified.

During the process of reduction, comparisons were made between codes in order to assess the relationships that existed. For example, the single-sex organization as a theme incorporated aspects that referred to personal characteristics, identity, a safe space, all of which had their own set of sub-themes. This allowed for a process of reduction and comparison to occur simultaneously in order to generate the complexity of the experiences.

The development of patterns was consolidated by referring back to the transcripts consistently in order to clarify the context of the texts, and ensure that the analysis represented a realistic assessment of women's experience.

Summary

The focus of this study, women's personal experiences, determined the methods used to collect data. Semi-structured interviews were used, the content of which was developed from pre-determined themes. The approach incorporated in-depth questioning, with the flexibility to pursue issues as they arose. The personal interaction of the interview situation allowed for the clarification of specific issues. The interview approach varied throughout the process, determined by the analysis of previous interviews, and by each woman's comfort level in the interview situation.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

In this chapter, I introduce the women who participated in the research and provide a broad summary of their characteristics. There is also a detailed description of their Guiding experiences, and their outdoor experiences in the teenage years and throughout adulthood. The content of this chapter is descriptive, and serves to bring forward the voices of the women[3], providing the reader with an insight into who these women were and what they have done.

To Whom Do the Voices Belong?

A general summary of the participants would describe them as predominantly white (one black woman), middle-class, educated, able-bodied, professionals, aged between 20 and 76. Ten worked within both the paid and voluntary sectors, four were students, and six were retired. Half of the group were married (or widowed) with children, and one woman was a single parent. One woman was disabled, wheelchair bound by the effects of polio, yet extremely active via the use of an electric "buggy". Home for many tended to be spacious houses situated in the suburbs, or acreages located beyond the city limits. A couple of the students were from outside Edmonton, and thus had migratory living patterns, returning "home" during the summer months. A few women lived centrally, yet the majority were settled in the suburbs.

Most women had experienced some level of post-secondary education, with the three youngest women presently at various stages of their undergraduate programs. Four of the older women (ages 64, 70, 74, 76) were the only participants not to have had some form of further education; in one instance because "father really didn't think that women needed education". For most women however further education had incorporated some form of teacher training or nursing qualifications. The comments that "I didn't want to be a teacher cause I'd been in school long enough, and mother said that secretary didn't count as a career, so that left nursing" (Janice), provide an insight into the possible explanations for the predominance of these careers. Of those women aged between 30 and 69 (n = 13), all except two had trained in these two professions, and the majority of these were working, or had worked, within their respective fields. Work included an assortment of full-time and part-time employment at locations including the university, hospitals, colleges, schools, with home tutoring, teaching first aid to community groups, and work with the YMCA, representing some of the voluntary occupations. Women who were not in these two professions were either students, or involved in some form of administration, or had spent

[3] All the names in this study are pseudonyms.

a major period of time in salaried positions working for the Guiding organization in Canada and England.

With over half of the women being parents, one of the most common characteristics was the temporary or permanent interruption of their career in order to be committed to parenting. In some instances, the interruption was brief:

> I finished off my BA [English] and got married shortly after that. Worked doing secretarial, then moved into administration, coordinating conventions, did that for a few years. I went back to school and got an education degree, and started teaching full-time in the English department eleven years ago. Had my first kid after teaching for three years, basically been a full time mother and teaching part time in the evenings at the college ever since (Fiona).

> I'm a teacher, early childhood...I only taught three years and then I had children....From the time the first daughter was six months old, I discovered I didn't like staying at home full time. Mum looked after the kids for one day a week and then I worked...and that was lovely because you're working, but you're not really working, but you have that space where you're not identified with the child....Our second child was a special needs child, so it was more difficult (to work)...I was home a lot, I still only work two mornings a week, and then I volunteer two afternoons (Helen).

A more common pattern involved a return to work after a period of time, although this was predominantly on a part-time basis:

> Went to university, worked for a year, married, had three kids. Went back to work [part-time] when the eldest was ten (Laura).

> I was in the Air Force during the war...met my husband, married...and became pregnant shortly after that. I didn't work until the youngest daughter was eight, then I went to work for the Girl Guides of Canada in the shop, for twenty years ....Women of my generation..very few worked outside the home (Rachel).

There was only one woman who did not return to paid employment. Her time had been spent committed to voluntary organizations, and also to home tutoring. The only other woman to have a similar pattern did eventually take up a paid position:

> I went to college, home nursing, got a good job, I worked for a trucking company...married at 23, had a daughter, went to Quebec, had another daughter there...Didn't work for years. [My husband] retired...and when he retired...I said well I'm going to work, there's no way I'm going to sit around and watch TV and smoke cigarettes all day, I wasn't ready to be a couch potato, so I went back to work for ten years. I was an executive secretary for an engineering consultant and I loved it. I hated to quit, but the time came (Shirley).

The single parent in this group was the only woman to maintain a full-time career. In many respects, her lifestyle was similar to three other women of a similar age without families. This had included a certain amount of mobility incorporated into careers or career

advancement. These women had travelled, been employed or educated around the country, in the States, and in places such as India or Australia. Three of the four women had continued to further their education, and were presently occupying university posts, and in one case, a department chair.

Guiding Experiences

Time spent in the Guiding organization as teens ranged from less than two years to eleven years. The pattern of membership tended to be either a short term of less than two years, or an extended period of five years or more, the length of which was often determined by the availability of a local company. In addition to the early experiences, many women returned to the organization as adults, often staying in the organization for extended periods of up to twenty-five years.

The experiences within the organization can best be summarised by grouping women whose Guiding experiences were very similar, and incorporating the enthusiasm expressed about early experiences and the time spent in the organization. This classification which proved to be stratified by age identified four different groups: Young-and-keen, Thirty-plus-and-positive, Lifers, and Not-impressed. The following passages describe the experiences within the groups.

Young-and-keen

This group comprises five women (Angela, Brenda, Christine, Dawn, Emma), aged between 18 and 30, including three students and two involved in administrative occupations. All were university educated.

> I was involved all the way through Brownies, Girl Guides, Pathfinders when it first came in, Rangers. [I've] been involved in Link. At present [I am] an adult member as a member at large on the international committee helping with the interview process and answering questions for people who are going travelling (Dawn).

> [My Grandmother] was a pack leader for Brownies....I admired her and I like what she did, and so I got into [Guiding] that way (Angela).

> I had a blast, I loved it actually (Emma).

> I would like to make it as a Guider and have that commitment to the girls and to the group...I think it's important to give back...Guiding has been really valuable in my life and I've gotten an awful lot out of being there (Dawn).

All of the women in this group had very positive experiences and were extremely enthusiastic about their Guiding years. Their experiences were felt to be lifeshaping. The feelings were expressed by all the women, including two who had either belonged to an assortment of companies around the country, and one who spent part of her time as a lone Pathfinder, missing Guides due to the absence of a local company. Having spent nine or more teenage years in the organization, there was a general feeling of "giving back" to the

organization in terms of adult leadership, although the time constraints of personal circumstances were often felt to prevent this. Only one woman spent time as Guider, however the others felt that this was something they would like to achieve.

With this group, the attachment to Guiding was not a solitary phenomenon. Much of the information about the organization had come from parents or a relative who had been involved in the organization as a child or as a leader, so there was a definite generational influence; "I remember seeing pictures of my mother in Guide uniform" (Christine). Four women had mothers who were in leadership positions in the organization, their participation occurring following the daughters' involvement. Guiding was thus very much a "family thing".

Thirty-plus and positive

Six women (Fiona, Helen, Irene, Karen, Laura, Maureen) aged between 39 and 56 were in this group, all with some form of post-secondary education. Four were married parents, all of whom were presently working in part-time positions in either the teaching or nursing professions. The two other women were single, with one a retired teacher and the other a university department chair.

> You couldn't become a Brownie until you were eight in those years, so I became a Brownie in 1958 and continued to be involved until almost sixteen (Helen).
>
> I was encouraged to join by mother (Maureen).
>
> It was the sort of thing that everyone did in those days...I know that a lot of friends in the area that I grew up in went to Brownies and it seemed like everyone in school did (Fiona).

Experiences in the organization, lasting from four to eleven years were generally positive, and "enjoyable" although they were not described to be the lifeshaping experiences of the Young-and-keen group. Two of the parents returned to the organization as adults because of a daughter's involvement:

> I ended up in a position where my second daughter joined (Brownies) and there was no leader, so either the Brownie pack was going to have to fold or they had to have somebody, so I stepped in (Helen).

Whilst most of the experiences were felt to be positive, it is interesting that this is the only group where there was a tendency to have a more critical perspective of the organization, something that will be discussed in later chapters.

Lifers

This group included five women (Olive, Pat, Rachel, Shirley, Winnie) aged between 64 and 76. Four were married (two widowed) with children. One was single and British, and had emigrated to Canada many years previously. None of the women was in paid

employment, although four of the five were involved in voluntary work on a regular basis. Only one member of this group had a post-secondary education, the remainder having gone straight into an occupation after high school. Occupations during the working years included one teacher, two administrators, the RAF during the war years, and two posts for the Girl Guides in both Britain and Canada.

Experiences as teens in the organization were mixed, although generally positive:

> I was in Girl Guides at thirteen for a couple of years...I remember really liking it...but can't remember why I left (Pat).

> The day I was old enough to join Guides, I joined...I never missed a meeting for five years, I got a star for attendance, I mean, I was a real Guide, I just loved it...and then when I was old enough I became company leader...and then I became captain and so on (Shirley).

> I can't remember much...it's just that I had a lot of fun, I remember having a lot of fun (Rachel).

Reasons for joining were not always remembered, although mothers were often cited as having encouraged them to go:"I think Mum wanted to be [a Guide] herself, and of course Dad thought it was fine, anything that you joined that was healthy and outdoors, my father thought was fine" (Rachel). Fading memories were a problem in these instances, with many of the experiences of the early years being a blur, rather than specific and distinct.

In many respects the overall feelings about the early Guide experiences were similar to the Thirty-plus-and-positive group. The manner in which this group were quite distinct was in terms of their adult leadership experiences. In this capacity, the women had spent between ten and twenty-five years in various leadership and administrative positions. The reasons for joining as an adult were because of having a daughter in the organization as well as responding to a leadership need. The nature of the adult participation was quite variable, with the women occupying a variety of leadership and administrative positions within the organization:

> Had little to do with the organization until the early 60s. Became a Brown Owl, was a Brown Owl for 8 years in two different packs. After this I worked with district, then the provincial office for a while editing the newsletter, organizing conferences, and worked with National from the provincial base....until 1973 (Olivia).

> Came back into the organization because of my daughter in Brownies. Started out as a badge secretary for three years, then I've been a commissioner, Guide captain, Brownie leader, pack holiday advisor, camp advisor and provincial treasure, all of these over a 25 year span (Pat).

The commitment to the organization in a leadership capacity was not the exclusive domain of parents. The single woman in this group maintained an active service in the organization as a result of her enjoyment of the early years. As an adult she was involved in Post-Brownies, similar to lone Guiding, running a company via mail, with get-togethers arranged a couple of times a year. In addition to this, she ran a regular company for a number of years, worked in the Guiding headquarters, and since being in Canada has

maintained active links with the organization to this day.

Not-impressed

This group included four women (Gloria, Janice, Nora, Phyllis) aged between 40 and 64. Three were parents, one of whom was a single parent. All four were university educated, with two occupying teaching posts in the university, one retired teacher, and one returning student. This group was identifiable by the manner in which their Guiding experiences had not been positive:

> I was in Girl Guides from about eleven to thirteen, about two years. Had to choose between the Girls Auxiliary and Girl Guides, decided to go on to the GA....I likely didn't think it was that enjoyable or I wouldn't have left (Nora).

> Well, I was going to say it was a waste of time, but it probably kept us off the streets (Phyllis).

> The Girl Guide leader wasn't as active as the Brownie leader, [she] was more interested in teaching leadership skills. I felt that this was learning to be a boss, I didn't want to be a leader or a follower so eventually left...I was very resistant...did the occasional thing that was fun, I guess that's what I wanted out of it, fun (Gloria).

The experiences were mostly less than two years long, with the reason for joining related to peers or "because there wasn't much to do" in the area.

In terms of adult leadership, only one woman had any adult involvement. This was due to her daughter's participation and involved support on outdoor camps:

> I was involved as a volunteer for Fiona's unit on the parent committee for two or three years. Once or twice they went to camp out at Sandy Lake north of the city and I acted as chief cook or quartermaster, something, but that was the extent of my involvement...I don't know why Fiona decided to join the Guides, but when she did that suited me fine...I didn't see anything wrong with it, and I certainly encouraged her to go (Phyllis).

The recollections of the Not-impressed were of some of the more negative associations with the organization. Leaders with a military emphasis, "old stodgies", and limited programs were all factors that were recalled as significant elements that made the experiences far from positive.

Guiding Outdoor Experiences

Although a fifty-six year gap existed between the youngest and oldest woman, the camping and outdoor experiences had a number of similarities which were evidenced across the range. Whilst there were differences in the opportunities that were available, plus some generational changes in the program, there was a basic format to the outdoor programs that

recurred throughout the women's descriptions of their experiences. At the foundation of the experiences was the camp, an aspect of the program that was experienced by some without any other outdoor participation. From the accounts of women's camps, there were "generic" camp experiences, representing the basic elements which were experienced across the generations. The camps incorporated fairly well structured days, providing a mix of both activity and organizational specifics:

> Well basically our days were pretty organised... We'd get up in the morning, cook breakfast and do all that getting ready, cleaning out the tent and have a sort of inspection kind of thing and did the flag business and sort of announcements and all that. Somehow that would take until about ten thirty in the morning, and then I think we had different chores. We'd have to clean the lats, be in charge of building the shower, the wood pile, the garbage or whatever, so sort of till lunchtime was getting things organised and in the afternoons we did crafts, and then there was always a hike or a swim or some outdoor activity...and then get ready for supper..and then, oh yeah, camp fires, I loved camp fires...Some days we'd have what might be an all day hike, so in the morning as soon as all the chores were done, we'd take a bag lunch and be gone until supper time (Emma).

The "generic" program, incorporating a structured regime of camp management and activity, was experienced in company, provincial, national and international camps. The common activities at camp were identified as swimming, hiking, nature work, some craft activities, badge work, and outdoor living. The outdoor living incorporated those activities that were necessary to maintain the functioning of the group camp: collecting and chopping wood, meal preparation, camp site inspections, and so on.

The nature of camps varied from short day or weekend camps, through to two weeks. These were either company camps, provincial camps, special interest camps, and for some, international camps. The company camps were ultimately controlled by the leaders, and the extent of their experience. Whether a camp was carried out under canvas or not was to a large extent dependant upon the leaders' experience, and of course, the time of year. In a situation where there was no tent camping involved with the company, provincial camps provided the opportunity to tent camp.

In addition to the camps, regular meetings would often be taken outside (weather permitting). Skills such as lashing, camp fires and plant identification were carried out in the regular weekly meetings. The extent to which the weekly sessions were located as the site of outdoor activity varied, however, the elements of these sessions retained much the same focus.The close proximity to resources such as the Saskatchewan River Valley, or nearby woods provided the opportunity for Guiding to be taken outdoors.

While the majority of women shared this common format, there were differences evident both within and across the groups. These were partially related to opportunity as well as the generational differences in terms of both outdoor activity and the Guide program, and are discussed for each of the four groups as follows.

Young-and-keen

The five women in this group were all extremely positive about their outdoor experiences; "That was what I joined for" (Angela) and "that was what I lived for" (Emma).

Belonging to very active companies, most of these women experienced two or more camps a year, and were also provided with many opportunities during the regular meetings.

> The first [camp] was for a weekend in May, then usually our company had...one weekend in the spring, a week in the summer and a weekend again in the fall...We also used to have a winter camp every year...we slept inside and did a lot of stuff outside, but if it was bitterly cold it was a limit to what you could do, you know, bundle up and go out and snowshoe for half an hour (Emma).

In some instances, companies were recognised as having a strong outdoor emphasis:

> I know for instance they would have people join our group because they were in a group that didn't do much camping... and for some people in ours who hated the outdoors stuff... they might go to a different group, you know, it was just a different emphasis (Emma).

The extent of the winter activity tended to be more than other groups experienced with regular skating, curling, snowshoeing, and skiing for some. In addition to the winter activities, opportunities to try activities such as climbing, rappelling and sailboarding were available to a number of the women, thus expanding the traditional scope of camping activities.

A particular element that served to differentiate most of this group was their experiences in the Pathfinder program, the most recent branch of Guiding. As Pathfinders, they had undertaken wilderness camps, or organized company camps, and had been provided with the responsibility of managing their own or group experiences; "the orientation is more taking you out so you're on your own".

The wilderness camps were basically survival experiences carried out in the absence of leaders:

> A weekend camp. You walked the gear in, camped in a lean-to. During those two days you could do whatever you wanted, but weren't to be interacting with other people (Dawn).

This survival experience ("the pinnacle") was a departure from the structured format of the organized camps, and represented an important part of the Guiding experiences for those who took part. The preparation for the camp was regarded as a process of being built up by the Guiders:"they were preparing us, slowly getting us ready for the responsibilities". There was a definite feeling of being nurtured towards this ultimate goal.

A second element of the Pathfinder program also sought to develop some responsibility among its participants:

> In Pathfinders there was a lot of work you had to do just to get one badge...You got your camping badge but you had to take some organization, some group of Girl Guiding to your camp, run the whole weekend and then you had to show three skills..and it was a big thing to do (Angela).

The responsibilities of these wilderness and smaller organized camps were carried out at the age of fifteen, the final year of the Pathfinder program. For those who took part,

they were felt to be an important, if not ultimate part of the organization, and a level of responsibility that was not evidenced with other women's experiences.

Thirty-plus-and-positive

Outdoor experiences were very much in the style of the generic program. There was usually a long camp of up to two weeks, with additional weekend camps or activities during the year, although for a couple of women the longer camps were the only source of activity. The winter months did not have as much activity as the Young-and-keen group. The weekly meetings were not particularly productive sites for outdoor opportunities.

One of the distinguishing features of this group was the manner in which experiences were felt to be particularly primitive:

> When I was a kid and we camped, that was rugged
> ...no butane..if it rained we got wet and our sleeping bags didn't dry out (Irene);
>
> Other girls went to spiffy camps (Karen);
>
> It was very primitive compared to today...cooking was on an open fire (Maureen).

The longer camps, coupled with the absence of conveniences, were expressed as part of the experience, and one which differentiated it from the present day. Coupled with this, the lack of negotiation or responsibility in the program was an important difference; independent experience and responsibility were not a feature of the camps.

There were some activities provided during the weekends which were mainly carried out in the summer months, although few women had this opportunity. These generally incorporated the more traditional activities:

> Did things like tracking...it was a Saturday morning thing, had to walk out there, then would build shoe racks and that sort of thing (Irene).

For half of the women in this group, their camping experiences included international camps, a couple of which were held in Belgium and Finland, as well as in Canada. These were felt to be highlights, and a factor encouraging a continued participation in the organization.

Not all of their experiences were positive. For one woman in this group, Helen, an early camp experience was very negative: "I hated it, and I never went back again". Her participation in Guides continued, although all subsequent camping experiences were carefully avoided.

Regular, rugged, and traditional summarize the experiences of these women, with the emphasis placed upon predominantly summer participation.

Lifers

During the teen years, the outdoor experiences varied among this group. One woman had no camping experience, while the others ranged from experiencing one camp through

to an annual two week camp with numerous weekend trips. Nevertheless, despite the different opportunities, the nature of camp activities followed much the same pattern as the generic camp form, although the times dictated some different aspects to the camp life:

> I think we went to camp for ten days, it was four dollars, we're talking about the Depression...We had a lot of fun at camp...there was no buildings, there was nothing there. We had to carry our water from wherever there was water (Shirley).

> We had to have camp uniforms and I remember mine were made out of dyed flour sacks...I remember going with these old quilts that my mother made and we had to make...our own pallets, it was made out of unbleached cotton. Mum had sewn together flour sacks, sugar sacks...you had one of those then the farmer gave us straw and you stuffed this full of straw (Rachel).

> Of course, we weren't concerned with cutting down trees in those days. We used to cut a thousand saplings, and nobody cared (Rachel).

Aside from the camps, a couple of the women belonged to fairly active companies, and were taken for regular day trips into the river valley, a local resource that was utilised by many a Guide company. "We learnt a lot about nature". Plant identification and "flowers" were a large part of the early outdoor experiences.

In terms of later experiences as adults, the Lifers all made a commitment to lead Guide camps and outdoor activities during these years. Four of the women incorporated annual camps and regular outdoor activities into their programs. Of these, two were extremely active, providing substantial opportunities for their charges:

> I took my Guides camping at least four times in the year. We'd go for ten days to two weeks in the summer and then we'd have weekend camps and winter camps and little treats along the way...In winter we would go snowshoeing and used to go out and make trails and follow trails. If we were out at the Guide camp at Sandy Lake we would spend the evening tobogganing...I went [wilderness camping] with the Rangers [and] we backpacked the Waskehegan Trail...I really enjoyed the camping, loved the outdoors and I spent a lot of time working on that because that was the part I really liked (Pat).

As a group, their participation in the outdoors during the years of adult leadership proved to be equivalent, and often greater than their participation during their teen years.

Not-impressed

For women in this group, either outdoor experiences were not available, or those available were not favourable:

> I know there was a Guide camp but I never thought the Guide camp was very good for anything, likely cause they didn't have any equipment, they just went out and camped in the bush....[In the meetings I remember] marching down the main street and walking five miles or something. Walking twenty steps and running twenty

steps, that's all I remember (Nora).

I can only remember being on a couple of outdoor activities and those were just around the city, and it'd be like wiener roasts or whatever, but I don't remember [the] captain being there, it was the second honcho, I guess they call them lieutenants...and I can remember going out on a couple of hikes with her but that was about the extent of it (Phyllis).

The only woman to have had any outdoor experience as a Guide had one successful camp, and then a miserable second camp which was instrumental in her decision to leave the organization. Ironically, one woman had belonged to an extremely active Brownie pack, an asset that was not carried over when she moved up into the Guide company. She promptly left the company.

Unlike other women, the Not-impressed group were generally not impressed with the experiences offered. As a result their reflections of the early years are quite different from the majority, providing a useful perspective to experiences within the organization.

Personal Outdoor Experiences

The nature of subsequent outdoor participation varied quite considerably amongst the respondents. Although most of the women had actively sought some form of outdoor experience, the nature of the experiences and the company with whom the experiences occurred was fairly diverse. There were some similarities in the pattern of sustained activity within the four groups and these are outlined as follows.

Young-and-keen

Bearing in mind that this group received the most activity in their Guiding years, the nature of their subsequent participation did not mirror this, with sporadic participation in the main, and in one case, no further activity. Of the participation that occurred, much of it was carried out in a manner similar to the Guiding experiences. Camping and activities such as hiking or cross-country skiing were popular.

On average, most of the women had undertaken some form of camping activity following high school, although this period was relatively brief. The camps were with friends and tended to be social occasions at areas such as Sylvan Lake which "didn't bear any resemblance to the camping that was like Guide camp" (Emma). Other than this, the amount of camping was negligible, and as one woman mentioned "the active camping part of [the outdoors] has fallen away for me now" (Dawn).

Of the subsequent outdoor activity, it was felt to be "really low key now". Walking in the river valley, fires in fire pits, "getting out to lakes" were all activities that were experienced when possible, although these were generally not regular occurrences. Only one of the women had a lifestyle that incorporated a regular level of activity, namely walking, and this was carried out within the local environment.

One of the factors consistent within this group was the manner in which both financial and temporal constraints of university or work life limited the extent of activity.

Only one woman was able to resolve her circumstances by securing employment as a camp counsellor over the summer months. She was the anomaly in the sense that she was still active in agencies such as the air cadets, and therefore still enmeshed in the offerings that were associated with such organizations.

Thirty-plus-and-positive

Family camping epitomises the nature of activity that was evidenced in this group. Of the four parents in the group, the family was the prime site of activity, with the experiences modified according to the needs or desired of the unit:

> Family camps were a bit more luxurious (Laura).
>
> I didn't camp by choice. My husband and I bought a trailer tent, then we moved into a trailer as quickly as we could...My mum and dad live at the lake now, so we have a permanent site for our trailer and we've dug a fire pit and we use it a tremendous amount (Helen).

The activity at camp was structured around the family:"When the kids were small we would mostly get up, cook, clean up the campsite...then used to entertain the kids" (Irene). With older children, there were more adventurous pursuits, including a week long canoe trip; however, the general emphasis followed the approach that was found in Guiding.

Of these parents, only one was active outside the family, walking on a regular basis with a couple of Guiding friends. The other women either limited activity to the family camp, or did activities such as hiking on an intermittent basis. There had been a commitment by two of the women to live on acreages, and this was seen as part of their commitment to the outdoor world.

The two single women in this group pursued a more active course of participation, both achieving this via the membership of organizations. In one instance, the Alpine Club of Canada and the Sierra Club in the States encouraged a very active outdoor life, with kayaking, mountaineering, some rock climbing and backpacking into wilderness areas. This lifestyle was maintained up until the start of a PhD which, coupled with an injury, resulted in a cessation of activity. The second woman belonged to several hiking clubs, and used organized trekking and holiday tours in order to pursue her outdoor interests. This included trail rides in the Rockies and back country tours in Australia, to name but a few. These were all with organizations; however, downhill skiing was the one activity that she experienced with friends and maintains to this day. In both these instances, external agencies were tapped in order to pursue outdoor interests.

Whilst incorporating active lifestyles on an annual basis, most of this group was not active in terms of a regular weekly or monthly level. Furthermore, activity tended to focus upon a social unit, whether this was the family or an external agency.

Lifers

Family camping and Guiding activities very much defined these women's participation. Family activities, as in the case of the Thirty-plus-and-positive group were

carried out in a similar manner to Guiding. In half of the cases, family camping was a modified form, incorporating activities such as hiking and camp fires, yet within a sheltered environment such as a trailer or a cottage. These women had never camped under canvas with families, yet had maintained an active camping component in their Guiding careers.

For those women who tent-camped with the family, this was the summer activity that was experienced "for years". In one instance this was the primary form of outdoor living, until the appeal was lost: "One year I just got fed up...It's no darn holiday cooking dinner at the end of a tired day when you've been doing all these things, looking for all these things in tidal pools and this sort of thing" (Rachel). Following this, the holiday's retained an outdoor focus, yet sheltered accommodation was sought.

Rachel and Pat were quite distinctive because they were very active Guiders, and much of their additional outdoor activity had been done with Guiding friends. Up until the last few years, there were backpacking trips, hiking, cross country skiing, and in the one instance, learning to downhill ski at the age of fifty. Only Rachel was still active, canoeing and hiking on a regular basis, with an annual trip to the mountains. Other women in the group had ceased activity, often due to injury.

The one single woman in this group was the only other presently active member. Although limited in some sense by her wheelchair, she maintained an active outdoor life via the use of her electric buggy. With this, she was able to travel around and regularly visited a centre for the disabled in Kananaskis. She also maintained a policy of just "getting out":

> I do the parliament buildings...I take a bit of knitting, then always books, and usually take food, and I have a lovely day...I like getting out the first time it gets nice enough, even if its just a little way, I go out and feel that lovely fresh air (Winnie).

A key feature of this group was the importance ascribed to the natural world, in particular to the appreciation of flowers and plants. In one instance, the appreciation of flowers was the only connection that remained to the outdoors, and was acknowledged as "such a big part of my life".

One of the important aspects of this particular group of women was the manner in which their Guiding activities as leaders were a major part of their outdoor life. As one woman commented: "it's funny, because as a family we never did camp", although her experience as a Guider had involved a huge amount of camping.

This group were generally enthusiastic about the outdoors, although for half this was a retrospective enthusiasm, and in many senses related to Guiding rather than personal experiences. Furthermore, in a similar manner to the Young-and-keen, the activities remain closely related to the Guiding framework. In terms of the family, only two of the women undertook activity outside of this context, and their participation is still very much a part of their life.

Not-impressed

Of the four women in this group, two had maintained a level of participation throughout their life course, whilst the other two had intermittent bouts of activity which h d peaks in the late teens\early twenties, a period of inactivity, with a resurgence of activity over the past few years.

I try and do something outdoors every year...I still kayak off the west coast of Vancouver Island, hiked the Chilicoot trail last summer... Sailing, I really like to sail, really into sea kayaking right now... I make a friend, I say lets go canoeing and I would much prefer that, like I don't want to go to a hotel and sit round a pool... Generally speaking I like to do things with friends. I don't like doing things with groups... I feel more myself when I'm outdoors than in the office...I really value an ability to interact with the physical world in a physical way (Nora).

When I got married, my husband's really into the mountains and climbing and stuff, so actually I've done a whole lot more since I was married...we've done a lot...hiking trips in the summer, we belong to a couple of these senior groups...and we go hiking with them every wednesday...and we're both members of the Alpine Club, I was never a climber but he was. We go up to Kananaskis and bicycle and cross country ski...and we skate in the winter time. We had a fair bit of opportunity, even when I was working...we've been in Nepal [trekking], climbed Kilimanjaro...we've done quite a bit...[The outdoors is] really important. If you can't get out in the winter time, you'd go nuts before too long...you really have to get out, it's really important (Phyllis).

At sixteen I became really rebellious, hitched across Canada, moved to Saltspring Island at nineteen...never got into things that were too physically demanding. I usually go out once a year to Jasper. When I lived on the coast I did that...it's not just a positive experience, but a necessary thing. More people should do it...I've been doing it consciously for the last ten years or so (Gloria).

Travelling was very important. At first it was fun things like Hawaii and Europe to backpack, and then I became more interested in what was going on in these places and the holidays took a very different tone in my thirties, more interested in what was happening politically. I've been camping a few times since, but nothing very memorable, backpacked, stayed in hostels...and to be honest I never thought of camping as being a really comfortable way to go (Janice).

Although the four women in this group were active, as the quotes demonstrate, their experiences were quite different. All four had ventured beyond the Guiding framework of organized camping and activity, particularly in terms of the rationale for activity. Political and physical motives were also evidenced, apart from or as well as a social emphasis. What women did, and why, was quite different to the women in the other three categories.

Referents of the Outdoor World

The descriptions so far have focused on the active components of these women's experiences, primarily because they were the common experiences. From these accounts, the nature of the outdoor involvement incorporated a number of elements including activity, living outdoors, and simply getting out. Working from this base, sustained outdoor involvement was maintained by most but not all women, with the extent of involvement varying substantially throughout the whole sample.

Throughout the interviews, the limitation of concentrating upon outdoor involvement

became apparent. There were other outdoor referents that were incorporated into women's lives, and represented an important facet of their outdoor experience, albeit in an abstract sense. These additional referents were based around knowledge pertaining to the outdoors, including both the maintenance and utility of knowledge. This incorporated the use of outdoor skills such as cooking, lashing, and camp fire skills in everyday life, plus the maintenance of knowledge through the use of outdoor texts such as nature books: "I've got a couple of books that I pick up either to refresh my mind or pass on to other people" (Dawn); "A lot of the information I keep and I've always kept it up." (Helen).

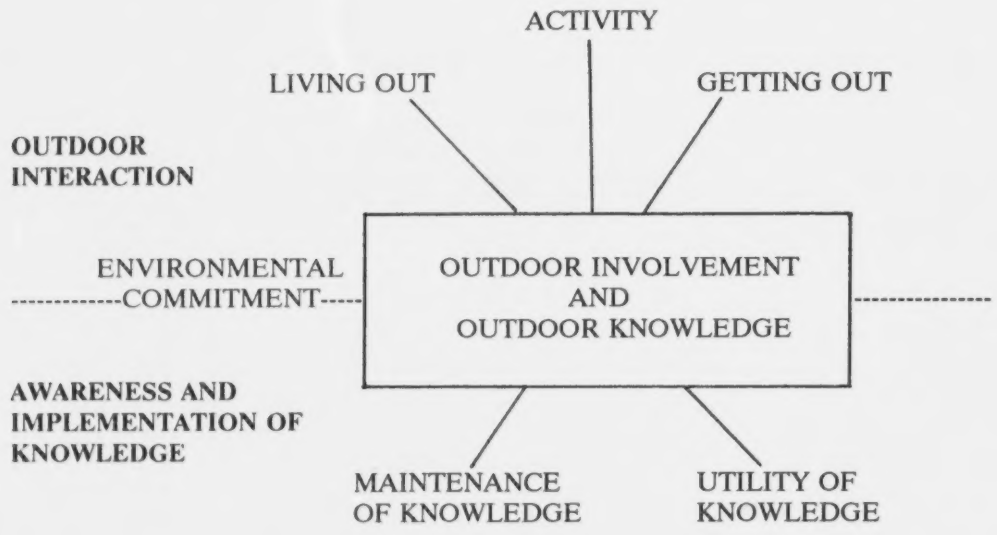
In addition to the outdoor-related knowledge, these women's practices often incorporated some form of environmental awareness or action. This ranged from an "appreciation of nature", to a more active commitment whether it was recycling garbage, not picking wild flowers, or fairly extensive measures:

> I pick my bugs and put them in a bag rather than spraying chemicals...My family is one of the ones that always does the walk around the diamond and pick up the balls and things that are left because I won't leave them there (Helen).

Once again, although this was not outdoor involvement in a traditional sense, the appreciatory or active commitment to nature was articulated by many women, and represented a major component of their lived experiences.

The main point to emphasise with regard to these less obvious facets of women's experiences is the manner in which such experiences were either a solitary experience, or part of a wider approach to the outdoors. Thus, for one woman, the maintenance of knowledge was the primary connection with the outdoors; yet for another, it was merely one aspect of an active engagement of both activity and knowledge. Within this context, any definition of outdoor participation became completely subjective, incorporating solitary or multiple factors as outlined :

Figure 2. Outdoor Referents: Components of Participation



Summary

The women interviewed included a fairly narrow array of predominantly white, middle class and educated women. Their experiences within the Guiding organization were generally very positive, with a few women representing a "negative sample", but providing another dimension to the data.

Outdoor experiences in Guides varied tremendously among the women, and in some respects were dictated by the nature of the company and its commitment to the outdoors. Further outdoor experiences were gained through leadership positions as adults, often encouraging greater activity than in the earlier years. Personal outdoor experiences were pursued by most women, and were exercised in a similar framework to the Guiding experiences. Very few women ventured beyond these traditional activities.

From the interviews, it became apparent that it is impossible to work with a universal definition of outdoor participation. Women included many outdoor referents in their lives of which activity and the outdoor environment were but a part. The awareness and implementation of outdoor knowledge were factors of women's expertise and experience, and will be pursued in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5

INFLUENCES OF THE GUIDING OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

In this chapter I discuss how the early outdoor experiences in Guiding have influenced women's lives. The first section of the chapter is concerned with the extent to which outdoor participation has been encouraged, and I discuss this within the context of the outdoor referents identified in the last chapter. As a brief reminder, the referents include: outdoor involvement in the form of activity, living out and getting out; an environmental commitment; and the utility and maintenance of knowledge. The discussion then broadens to include the impact of the experiences at a personal level. In the third and final section I discuss whether Guiding experiences have limited or expanded women's aspirations and potential in the outdoor world, drawing upon information from the previous sections.

Influences of Outdoor Participation: Outdoor Referents

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the nature of women's outdoor participation varied tremendously and incorporated the various outdoor referents pertaining to both knowledge and involvement. The impact of the Guiding years was equally diverse, encouraging an active interaction with the outdoors for some, and a more passive and sporadic engagement with outdoor knowledge for others. As with participation, the impact was expressed in highly subjective forms.

Outdoor involvement

The extent to which Guiding experiences encouraged active outdoor involvement proved to be a difficult question to investigate. For many women, Guiding was one of a number of agencies offering outdoor opportunities. Families, and organizations such as the YWCA and the church provided camping, hiking and other outdoor activities, and as a result, memories of the early experiences were intertwined: "We belonged to the United Church and I went to United church camps as well [as Guide camps], so it's kind of muddled" (Fiona, TPP[4]). The impact of Guiding in encouraging active participation in later years was thus difficult to specify, representing but one of a number of outdoor opportunities, and difficult to isolate from other experiences.

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[4] The abbreviations following women's names refer to the groups they were placed in: YK = Young-and-keen; TPP = Thirty-plus-and-positive; LF = Lifers; NI = Not-impressed.

For a number of women, Guiding experiences were directly responsible for further participation. The activities identified included hiking, camping, travelling and having camp fires. For many of these women, Guiding provided the only exposure to specific activities or outdoor experiences:

> It's hard to know what I would have done if I hadn't done any camping...In those days people didn't camp with school or family (Karen, TPP);
>
> It's the only [outdoor] experience I had as a child (Gloria, NI);
>
> Hiking: I wouldn't have been surprised if it came from Guiding because I didn't belong to any other organization that would of encouraged it (Helen, TPP);
>
> I wouldn't have camped at all if not for the early guide experiences (Maureen, TPP);

For these women, the influence of their Guiding experiences was obvious to them. Any outdoor experience in adult life was an offshoot of the early exposure in Guiding, basically because those were their only outdoor experiences. These did not represent a large portion of the participants, and comprised mostly women in the Thirty-plus-and-positive group and the Lifers. The Young-and-keen all had active families, so the outdoor world was familiar beyond the Guiding context.

Meaning ascribed to outdoor experiences

> If I hadn't had that [Guiding] exposure I wouldn't have known how important it is to me, and it wouldn't make sense now I think (Emma, YK).

A way in which Guiding remained distinct and differentiated from other experiences was through the meanings that were created from the early experiences. Guiding influenced how the outdoor world was defined at a personal level, with the definition shaping subsequent participation quite profoundly in some instances. The experiences were defined as more than a physical interaction with the outdoor world. There was an emotional element to the experiences which, although often abstract, was a major determinant in the decision to participate in later years. To illustrate this, the most frequently mentioned definitions ascribed to the Guiding experiences made reference to "enjoyment" and "fun":

> The outdoors as fun and wilderness...those early experiences were always fun...that's where I locate my liking for the outdoors...a happy fun sort of thing even though it's often a physically demanding thing (Gloria, NI).
>
> I think in terms of my enjoyment [of camping] and sort of wanting to get back into it because I do have very good memories, certainly of the camp fires and the singing and stuff, and I think that's one thing that encouraged me in terms of wanting to do it now with my kids...I remember when I was growing up it always seemed to be my mother just feeling miserable and I can understand now why. She had four kids and making meals and washing dishes and stuff like that, it couldn't have been a whole lot of fun, and it just seemed to me that my parents were arguing about whatever

> and I don't remember it being an uplifting experience, so I think that part of [Guiding] has certainly influenced me in terms of seeing camping in a positive light (Fiona, TPP).

The sense of enjoyment was more important to some women than others, although it did identify a fundamental component of the outdoor experience. For Fiona in particular, the identification with enjoyment was a very important factor. Experiences with her family as a child had been "sort of overkill...I went through a stage of just the thought of camping sent a chill down my spine". The context rather than the activity itself defined the return to the outdoors some fifteen years later.

The relationship between "fun" and participation is something that curiously the literature on the outdoors seems to overlook. Work located within an educational context (Elkin, 1987; Humberstone 1986, 1990; Priest, 1986) over-accentuates the transformation of character in attitudinal, social and spiritual ways. The age-old quip that "this can't be fun it's educational" seems to be reified in the search for personal change from these experiences. Similarly, the research referring to recreational experiences for women (Henderson, 1992, 1993; Henderson and Bialeschki, 1986, 1987; Miranda and Yerkes, 1983) stresses the impact at a personal level, emphasising character rather than mood. What the women in this study emphasise however is that the experiences were primarily "fun", and on the basis of this, were worth pursuing in later years. Although this might be stating the obvious, a "fun" experience can have extremely positive gains, as these women demonstrate. This is obviously an element of the experiences that should not be neglected in the search for personal growth.

The expressions of Guiding as having created a positive attitude towards the outdoor world were by no means an exclusive factor. Guiding experiences were sometimes defined in a manner that discouraged or limited the pursuit of activity. One of the more common expressions related to the way in which camping in particular was perceived as being either "primitive", or associated with survival. In such instances, the experiences were not seen to be something to replicate:

> I don't see the camping and outdoor stuff as a hobby, it's a choice, a method to survive in the world. It always feels like a survival thing, not a pleasure thing (Christine, YK).

For Christine, there had been no outdoor involvement since leaving Guiding. The outdoor experiences were perceived as highly functional in that they were related to a specific context, namely survival. The emphasis upon the manner in which this was not "a hobby" was crucial. Although the experiences as a child were positive, they were still framed within a functional context: "It was a test to see what you can do. It worked because of the person I am, I loved the challenge of it." This was not an issue of comfort, a perspective that differentiated Christine from other women who identified differing comfort levels:

> I never thought of camping as being a really comfortable way to go (Janice, NI);

> Camp was very primitive...I decided I didn't like sleeping in a tent, I like camping in comfort...[In later years] I did a trail ride into the Rockies. I wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been with the facilities laid out, all organized, camping with class...Guiding helped to show what I was prepared to do and what I was prepared

to modify (Maureen, TPP).

> The toilets were outside...there was just a basin outside on some wooden sticks and it was cold water...there were bloodsuckers in the water where we were supposed to swim...I knew then that I would never camp, I would never do that again (Helen, TPP).

The equation of camping and discomfort seemed to fall along a continuum that at one end had Helen who was put off camping for life, and at the other, Brenda (YK) who actively sought primitive, survival experiences. In between these were women such as Maureen and Laura who were prepared to modify their experiences to something that they found more acceptable. This was particularly evident with family experiences where camps were more "luxurious", sheltered in cottages and tent trailers. Camping in the Guiding context was recreated to a personally acceptable form.

Very seldom was this primitive aspect of camping sought or celebrated. Brenda (YK) was the only woman for whom wilderness survival represented the rationale for participating. For some others, the challenge of the primitive represented a prominent facet of the experience, although this was not necessarily a prerequisite:

> [In Guides] I remember meeting the challenge, it seems to me we all did. We went in the freezing lake, we all survived...I think that meeting problems and challenges...is kind of fun...Once the kids were born, took them camping...I looked forward to it as a real adventure. Took an old canvas tent, ran into some problems, flooding, mosquitoes, things like that. I enjoy that kind of a challenge, not that I look for it, but I do know how to deal with it...I think probably what the Girl Guides taught me was how to cope...being able to survive without all the conveniences (Irene, TPP).

Unlike most women, Irene was lamenting her husband's decision to buy a motorhome rather than continuing their holidays under canvas. Her compromise was to take a tent and "always do the cooking outside". The primitive aspects which were avoided or modified by many, were in this case how the experience was defined, with feelings of challenge and accomplishment arising from the early years.

The definitions of the outdoors as fun or primitive made a significant contribution to how and whether women pursued outdoor activities. For many women, however, the outdoor world was recognised as more than a hobby or the pursuit of an activity. Beyond the active frame of reference, Guiding was instrumental in developing a lifestyle into which the outdoor world was incorporated:

> I think [Guiding has] just given me such a general love of the outdoors, it's just made it very much a part of my life...to be able to see all the time the wonderful things that are out there (Rachel, LF).

> I still love flowers...Flowers were such a big part of my life, well they still are. This year I've had to hire somebody to plant my flowers because I'm not able to do it this year, but that was a big part of Guiding for me (Shirley, LF).

As "part of my life", the outdoor world was sought or desired, although not necessarily in an active manner. The sense of lifestyle r ferred to an engagement with the

outdoor world that was often passive and emotional as in the expressions of the natural world. This was often equated with a "need", and a feeling of "getting out" into the outdoors for its own sake. The rationale behind the need was related to the "invigorating" nature of the outdoors, as well as feelings of "freedom" and "a sense of wonder". These expressions were closely tied to an appreciatory sense of nature, and the awareness of the natural world was a large part of the impact of being out there.

> For your soul I think you need to get out there and pay attention, every once in a while to look up and see...and often nature that way becomes really invigorating...sometimes it's just getting out to the garden, then you are creating differently (Dawn, YK).

An extension of the need to get out was recognized in the form of outdoor living. This was a significant feature for women who had chosen to live on acreages, or spend summers in primitive cabins, and so on. The crucial part of this was once again the "being" outside rather than the "doing" outside.

> We live on an acreage, part of [the Guiding influence] was to be living out in the fresh air . Have had to make quite a commitment to live outdoors, a lot of driving. To own an acreage was a big goal of mine (Laura, TPP).

The outdoor lifestyle was often incorporated with activity, however the notion of "being out" was presented as the rationale behind the activity. The outdoors satisfied an emotional rather than physical need. Hiking for some was thus a reason to get out and appreciate the outdoors, rather than an activity undertaken for the physical challenges. The absence of outdoor activity being defined in physical terms was something that was completely different to my personal experiences, and an issue that differentiated the Not-impressed from the rest of the group. For two of the Not-impressed in particular, the physical interaction with the outdoor world was the primary motivation for undertaking the activity. Both women were extremely active in the outdoor world and felt that "you'd go nuts" without this physical engagement.

The personal interaction with the outdoors in an emotional and appreciatory, rather than a physical, sense provides an alternative perspective to the outdoor world. At face value, the extent of some women's outdoor participation would appear to be minimal if one was to consider "activity" as the primary quantifier of this participation. The lived reality of these women, however, demonstrates that the relationship with the outdoor world is very complex and incorporated into individual lifestyles in a highly subjective manner.

The impact of mainstream outdoor experiences is recognized as "intrinsic" and "deeply rooted in human sociopsychology" (Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1990), with self development gained through the challenges presented in the outdoor environment (Markowitz, 1993; Priest, 1986). What the literature fails to acknowledge is the interpretation of these "cultural" experiences at a subjective level. The curriculum is imposed with clear objectives, but the manner in which the individual locates herself within this curriculum fails to be considered. Within the context of Guiding, the culture constructs the outdoor practices, however women create very different sets of meanings for these practices which play a part in whether or not they pursue subsequent experiences. This accentuates the subjective interpretation and outcome of what are basically very similar experiences.

Outdoor knowledge and skills

Outdoor knowledge and skills were aspects of the early years that made a large impression over the long term. Many of the basic outdoor skills, such as camp fire skills, knots, lashing, and cooking were used on a regular basis.

> The skills have stayed with me, interdisciplinary things, a fantastic form of education...I can do all sorts of things, all of the tasks, I use them in day to day, just knowing how to do things, a basic education of how to do things. (Christine, YK)

> I know that information is there. I know that I've always been able to lash and make things. (Helen, TPP)

> Lashing; I used it all the way through life. (Laura, TPP)

> I can still do knots and lash. It's just a little thing, but it's a life skill. (Kathy, TPP)

The skills were identified as elements of the outdoor experience that individuals could do, often being used a on day-to-day basis and not necessarily in the outdoor context. Whether the skills were practised on a regular basis or presumed to be something that had not been forgotten, they were elements of the early Guiding experiences that had made an enormous impression.

Both the outdoor skills and knowledge played an important part in women's outdoor participation. The camp fire in particular was a popular activity in its own right, with fire pits located in women's homes or at their cottages. Camp fire cooking and singing were regular occurrences and a popular family activity. "At the cottage at the lake we did the same type of activities as Girl Guides...Camp fires, treats and doughboys, a lot of that stemmed from Girl Guides". These were social occasions with the fire being used for entertainment rather than function.

Many women used the skills in teaching, as parents, grandparents, or as Guide leaders. Both the camp fire and plant identification were examples of skills passed on to younger generations. For some of the women who were not particularly active, these skills were features that had been maintained over the years and were something "that I have instilled in my children". Shirley, who had never camped with her family, made an active commitment to teach her children and grandchildren "about nature". All of the information, and the enthusiasm, to do this had come from Guiding.

The outdoor knowledge that had been gained from Guiding was something a few women found very useful in later years. Within the context of outdoor involvement, the outdoor knowledge was a key factor in "the planning and preparation of a trip" (Laura, TPP) and "the sense of being prepared" (Karen, TPP). For those women who chose to undertake outdoor trips and activities, the logistics of trip planning was an asset that had been learned in Guiding and was directly applicable to the later experiences. In a broader context, outdoor knowledge was incorporated into everyday living:

> Now when I buy clothing I think of certain things, could I wear this when I do such and such, to the kind of car I bought...camping things that I've done, the cooking got translated to indoors... an important part of my cooking repertoire...the outdoor influence comes back in information that you make connections to...what do I stock

my car with, what kinds of things might I give as christmas presents to somebody for their car or for their camping? (Dawn, YK)

When I'm going on a trip in the car, what have I got in the trunk, could I handle if the car broke down, would I be warm enough? Preparing ahead for things that might happen (Karen, TPP).

The outdoor knowledge was utilised in "lots of little ways" which crept into everyday life. As well as the implementation of this outdoor knowledge, the awareness of having the knowledge was a significant factor for some women. This was also associated with a degree of expertise:

You become a resource...I know this and I can pass it on to somebody else, and this makes me feel good that I have this knowledge (Dawn, YK).

For women who were not particularly active, the awareness and utility of knowledge was an important manifestation of the early years, and something that was often maintained over the years through either periodic or constant revision. For someone like Dawn who was not able to venture outdoors as often as she liked, the maintenance of knowledge and skills were an important part of her outdoor commitment. Updating information, as well as acting as a resource base for information in her office, were ways in which the connection to the outdoors was maintained without necessarily "getting out".

Competence

A benefit of the long term commitment to Guiding was the awareness of outdoor competence. Women were competent practitioners in the outdoor world, with outdoor involvement, skills and knowledge all recognised as a part of this defined competence:

I know exactly what I have to do if I want to go camping (Angela, YK).

I feel like if I was lost I'd know what to do. I know I can do it...its an alternative environment that I could survive well and comfortably in (Christine, YK).

To go hiking or something, I would have no qualms about going and thinking that I should be alright (Dawn, YK).

I could survive, and I could help others to survive. I know that I've always been able to lash and make things. I know that I could survive overnight without a tent. I know there's no problem with that.. I know that I can do all those things, and I did know I could do them whether I did them or not...I think that [Guides] was significant in making me feel that way (Helen, TPP).

I could do everything...I can put up a tent with the best of people (Pat, LF).

Across the generations, women were confident in their ability to survive in the outdoor world, although this competence was more often than not made with reference to

a hypothetical and predominantly untested situation. The awareness that the potential ability existed was a meaningful factor for some women and incorporated two different elements: "I know I can do it" and "I feel good about that". Both competence and self-confidence were related here by acknowledging an ability that was validated on the basis of the prior Guiding experiences. The assumption remained that the knowledge and ability was available if required.

Comments like "I can do it" are the personal verification of outdoor competence without the actualization of the skills. This is very much an indication of the broad manner in which "outdoor participation" is perceived. To know that one can do the skills can be as important as actually carrying out those skills, particularly if there is not the time or opportunity to maintain a chosen level of participation.

One of the ways in which Guiding nurtured this competence was through the "demystification" of the outdoor world. Women felt that the outdoor world was not an abstract or unpredictable environment. The camping experiences "just became an ordinary thing" and "the wilderness kind of became routine". The outdoor world was an alternative environment in which women could confidently survive. Guiding developed this familiarity with the outdoor world, and the associated competence was something that was sustained throughout the adult years, whether or not those experiences were relived.

An additional measure of outdoor competence was reflected when women were able to compare themselves to others. Competence was acknowledged through a self-monitored validation process: "The girls and I put up the tent while my husband went off fishing, because we knew how to put up the tent properly" (Pat, LF); "I know even today, and my husband has enjoyed camping better than I have, but I can make a better fire than he can" (Fiona, TPP). Whether comparisons were made to a partner, peers, or parents, the comparisons were external signifiers from which competence could be acknowledged.

This topic is pertinent to the research relating to women's experiences in the outdoors, because a lack of competence is one of the reasons given for women failing to participate in later years (Henderson and Bialschki, 1993). From this discussion of competence, it should be apparent that this was a major impact of Guiding, although it did not necessarily encourage active participation later on. The early experiences developed a familiarity with the outdoor world and honed the skills necessary to survive. Without practising these skills, women were confident that the expertise still remained; a celebration of competence without the actualization of the skills.

Environmental awareness

The awareness of some form of environmental knowledge, or a commitment to the environment, was one of the more common consequences of the Guiding experiences. A frequently expressed sentiment referred to a respect for nature. This incorporated the idea of being "good in terms of treating the environment", valuing, respecting or "cherishing" the earth, as well as "knowing how to be when you're out in nature". Throughout these definitions was an underlying moral code that was linked to the idea of being "good" from an ethical or Christian point of view, rather than from a political standpoint. Guiding experiences were influential in identifying this ethical code of environmental conduct:

> I was chastised for breaking a tree but it was because I had destroyed a property, and it had nothing to do with the tree until I realised that these trees are being

killed and it was a completely individual revelation...I think that maybe Guides helped shape it (Helen, TPP).

There was an explicit relationship with the natural world which was defined from a basis of respect or value. This incorporated first, an appreciation that promoted an enjoyment of the natural world, and second, the responsible use of that resource in order to make it available for others to use:

You left the site as if you had never been there"(Emma, YK);

Never leave anything behind, clean up, the only thing you take home is pictures and that sort of thing. I really worked on that area because I enjoyed it so much myself that I wanted it to be there for the rest of the people" (Pat, LF).

This sentiment of an appreciatory and responsible use of the land was one aspect of Guiding evidenced across the generations. With the older members, the same practices existed, however "...there was none of this environmental stuff...there was no such word as environment" (Shirley, LF). The idea of cleaning up and littering were concepts that were a part of everyday life, but were practised at the local level and related to a notion of property, rather than any formal environmental ethic.

With the younger members of the group, it is interesting to see how little the emphasis has changed. To refer to the current Policy Organization and Rules, the mandate outlines the aim to "create ...an appreciation of the beauty and wonder of nature; and promote environmental stewardship and sound conservation practices" (Girl Guides of Canada, 1992, p.3), or more succinctly the aim identified on the Girl Guide cookie box is "to develop environmental responsibility" (Girl Guides of Canada, 1990). These sentiments epitomise a "responsible" attitude to the environment that incorporated both an appreciation of the land as well as the motivation to maintain it for others. The aims are not political; the interaction that is encouraged is not political. Cleaning up, removing litter, leaving no traces, are all responsible and certainly civil actions undertaken from the perspective of an environmental awareness, and actions that have been encouraged for the past fifty to sixty years. In a society that has adopted pollution and recycling with a fervour over the past few decades, Guiding does not seem to have followed in the wake. The impact of Guiding thus remains very specific, retaining the underlying moral code; this is all part of being a "good citizen":

The information that's being brought forward to you by your Guider is very much appreciatory material of nature as a valuable environment...The program and the camping experiences teach you to value it. When you're getting your camping training, what shouldn't you do to a tree, how should you leave the campsite and how should you treat your water and all those other things (Dawn, YK).

The point of interest here is how the environmental emphasis has been fairly constant throughout the history of the organization. Whilst it originally was felt to be "ahead of the times" by some of the Lifer's, it is now almost passe, in that the current social environmental trend is becoming ever more political and radical. This is not to say that Guiding should adhere to a specifically political stance, but rather demonstrates how the times are leaving behind an aspect of the program that was originally quite progressive. This

also demonstrates how part of the original ideology is maintained within the contemporary movement, an issue that has implications in the broader context of the organizations' goals.

Beyond the organizational focus, the appreciatory view of the environment did influence women's outdoor involvement. The images of enjoyment and "wonder" that were frequently located in women's definitions of the outdoor world were a result of the appreciatory emphasis. The emotional link to the outdoors was part of this code of appreciation and respect, coupled with a commitment to knowledge about the very substance of the natural world. Thus, plant identification and tracking, skills with an environmental emphasis, were popular experiences associated with the early years. Incorporated into an active or passive engagement with the outdoor world, the impact was acknowledged across the generations and an important offshoot for many.

These attitudes towards the natural world bear little relationship to the essentialist arguments that identify the "closeness of women and nature as evidenced by their shared cycles" (Henderson 1992; Henderson and Bialeschki, 1986, 1987a). The only woman to express an intimate "connection" to the natural world viewed this as a critique of western epistemology which had stemmed from her interest in native spirituality:

> It has something to do with all lifeforms being connected, so an essential oneness of all that is, and therefore if we're so fundamentally connected, the whole western science thing of dominance and submission doesn't make sense any more ... I was tutoring Cree for a while, so it's learning that native language gives you a whole different way of looking at the world (Emma, YK).

The appreciatory relationship with nature indicates that within a given culture such as Guiding, an awareness and understanding of elements of the natural world can be encouraged. There is no evidence to support the essentialist debate, however, the comments made by Emma demonstrate that the complexities of the natural world can be redefined through access to alternative cultural spheres. There is thus room to accommodate a variety of positions within this domain. The generalizations within the literature remain overly simplistic and certainly inappropriate when compared to the women's experiences in this study.

Summary: Outdoor participation

In many respects, the impact of Guiding in encouraging outdoor participation is epitomised by this quote:

> The basis of outdoor education really taught an appreciation, more than an appreciation of the outdoors. I live on a farm, have 200 acres, don't use any poison, have no guns, have creeks, coyotes, beavers. I really appreciate the outdoors, nature and the weather...I can track a porcupine, can track a bear, can tell you which way they are going, and I think that Girl Guides and the outdoor experiences did give me that. I mean, I'm not a nut, I don't do the ten day backpacking sort of thing, it's just sort of a gentle thing that I have. It's something too that I have instilled in my children (Irene, TPP).

Guiding, in a subtle, yet positive way encouraged most women to maintain a level of participation. For the women whose only outdoor experiences were through Guiding, the early exposure was crucial because it provided access to opportunities in the outdoor world. A more common influence was identified through the meanings ascribed to the early experiences. Whether defined as fun, primitive, survival, or a part of women's lifestyle, the definitions moulded the nature of subsequent participation. Furthermore, integrated into women's participation were expressions of competence, and a sound environmental appreciatory ethic. An enjoyment of nature and the outdoors was fostered rather than the creation of active outdoor technicians. This was an emotional rather than physical commitment to the outdoor world that incorporated activity, skills and knowledge in a variety of situations, all of which were rationalised at a highly subjective level.

Broader Impacts of the Guiding Experiences

For many women, Guiding made a significant impression at a personal level. Personal, social and nostalgic factors were all identified as worthwhile manifestations of the Guiding experiences, and for some women represented the most significant factor of those early years.

Influences to the personal

> I think that looking back to how I was as a seven year old, I would be hard pressed to find anything that had more impact on me in terms of developing self confidence, increasing my self esteem...I think that if I take away everything else that I did in my life in terms of school and other Guides things, other you know church or sunday school things, all of those things, if I put them aside and just isolated camping in Guides and the other outdoor stuff, I think I could say that they did increase self confidence and self esteem, and be able to work with groups as well as individuals in terms of cooperation and how groups work together, so that for personal development it was of primary importance. (Emma, YK)

These sentiments, or aspects of them, were echoed by many women. The comments regarding self-confidence were often expressed by women who were shy as teens, or were not members of the "in" groups at school: "Girls who went to Girl Guides were nerds...I wasn't confident as a kid, a loner" (Laura, TPP). Developing confidence was a major factor that was associated with "capabilities" and success:

> Everything you do increases your self-confidence providing it's a success. Most everything we did was successful (Irene, TPP);

> Chopping wood, making a fire, putting up tents,
> establishing a campsite. I can do this even though I haven't done it for a while (Maureen, TPP).

The enhancing of self-confidence derived from both a sense of achievement and the

awareness of outdoor competence mentioned earlier. Completing tasks in the outdoors, experiencing the success of making camp fires and outdoor cooking, and having the knowledge to survive in the outdoor world were all aspects of the outdoor experiences that bolstered confidence. The exclamation that "I can do it" was a recognition of this personal ability in the outdoor world.

The increased self-esteem that was articulated by a couple of women was connected in particular to the experiences of survival. One particular experience of a wilderness camp made an enormous and lasting impression:

> I felt different when I got home, I felt powerful ...your strengths and weaknesses are identified....I felt huge out there by myself, I know I can do it (Christine, YK).

The notion of self-sufficiency was a critical part of the survival experience because it encouraged "the belief that you can manage on your own, it's all tied up in self-image". This was once again closely related to the feelings of competence expressed earlier. The comments that "I can survive" were popular proclamations; however, the words of one woman best express the sentiments:

> I know that I've always been able to lash and make things. I know that I could survive overnight without a tent, I know there's no problem with that.....I've just gone through a mid-life crisis, and I don't have a tremendous amount of self-esteem, and I don't have an overwhelming amount of confidence, but there are certain things that I know I can do and I feel good about and I have no problem with and one of them is camping and the outdoors (Helen, TPP).

Physical self

In addition to the influence on the emotive self concept, the sense of the physical self was developed through the camping and outdoor experiences:

> [Guides influenced] a sense of myself as a physical person...Girl Guides pushed and forced you to develop skills and gave the time to develop skills to the best of my ability...I know that I can be strong, that I have a strong body, I have a strong back. I can lift things, I can move things...I can walk forever (Christine, YK).

In this particular case, Guiding was the only source of physical activity in the early teenage years. Due to physical problems, physical education was not an option at school, and as a result, the impact of the camping and outdoor activity was particularly important. Guiding provided the means to develop physical skills at an individual level, an asset that was reflected upon as a crucial and significant component of those early experiences.

A more regularly articulated reference to the physical self was in the context of what I have called the "star apologetic", a phenomenon that was evident across the generations. This refers to the expressions such as "I was never very good [at sport]" or "I never starred at anything", all of which were mentioned with reference to school sports and competitive team games. Incorporated into these comments were often feelings of the "total humiliation" of the team situation from the perspective of a non-star. Guiding, on the other hand, presented physical challenges in a different context: "not being very athletic [Guiding] was

good for me because I might not have taken part in sports" (Olive, LF). Thus, learning to swim and hike, being taught how to chop wood were all physical skills which were viewed as important, and represented accomplishments that helped to identify women's physical potential. This related to the feelings of competence and accomplishment mentioned earlier, with examples such as chopping wood against "the boys" identified as a physical triumph and confirmation of physical ability at a personal level.

Social aspects

The social aspect of camping was a notable element of the outdoor experiences. For many it was recognised as one of the most positive things about Guiding, and the main reason why they stayed in Guides. At a personal level, the social aspect had a major impact and was articulated in a number of ways:

> It taught a great deal about cooperation. Being an only child there were a lot of things I needed to learn, all the things you had to do as a group (Olive, LF).

> I learnt a lot from Girl Guides ... on how to associate with people and, I mean when you have to live with a girl you hardly know for ten days you kind of get to understand people and you are more lenient, and you're not for me, me, me, any more (Angela, YK)

Sharing tents and chores, and the communal living within an alternate environment was a constructive means to learn how to "get on with people". This was particularly evident in situations where women were "thrown straight in" to participate in camps where other campers were not known prior to the event. This was the case for provincial, national and international camps, and something that was not necessarily an easy step to take:

> At first I was terrified cause I didn't know any one, but then you make friends and sort of that immediate bonding that happens when you're living together for twenty-four hours a day (Emma, YK).

These non-company camps where other the participants were strangers encouraged recollections of fond memories. Many women had maintained contacts with friends they had made during these camps. In one instance, a woman was still in contact with someone she met at a provincial camp in 1945. Others had kept pen-pals for a while, and visited friends who were made during such periods, all of which were meaningful consequences of the early experiences. A feature of these experiences that was recognized as significant was the common link to the organization that all the girls shared. The "strangers" at camp were thus united by their allegiance to the organization. Common links were found, whether this was felt to be that all compatriots were "living by the [Guide] laws", or merely the actuality of being a Guide: "You're all sisters right off the bat...like, it's just a community".

This "sisterhood" was also recognized as having an impact in the company camps. The shared outdoor experiences helped to bring childhood relationships "closer". Women had recollections of "special" childhood friends with whom they shared their Guiding experiences. The experiences provided a meaning to the relationships that was not necessarily promoted through other childhood experiences.

The long-term and "common" Guiding experiences are two factors that serve to enhance women's homosocial relationships, which prove to be "special" and lifelong in some instances. The existing research indicates that girls "develop a sense of support for each other" during all-girl activities (Green, 1987, p.31), and "develop friendships amongst themselves and with the other sex" (Humberstone, 1990, p.209) in co-ed settings. Beyond this, there is no discussion of homosocial relationships. Questions regarding how girls' relate to, or perceive each other, physically or emotionally, fail to be addressed. The predominant emphasis remains on male-female relationships which question what boys think of girls (Humberstone, 1990, 1990a), but not what girls think of each other. Although this study has not addressed this issue in depth, there is certainly an indication that the nature and impact of homosocial relationships is worthy of more attention.

The camp fire was identified as a popular source of meaning for many women, with both social and shared elements of the experience located within that meaning. Described in one instance as "the most intimate part of Guides", the camp fire was a significant social encounter:

> Well I guess usually at night time there's usually something exciting about being outside and the camp fires going and a sense of togetherness or whatever and, yeah, there's certainly a lot of warmth, not just physical warmth from the fire but sort of an emotional or spiritual or whatever sense of again being part of a group or whatever (Fiona, TPP).

The camp fire as the highlight of the camping experiences was identified by many women. This was made in reference to feelings of "community" and "getting together", and represented one of the most popular social referents. Certainly to look at the number of women who incorporate camp fires into their later outdoor involvement, it suggests a powerful impact of this aspect of the experiences.

"So nostalgic...the best"

The camp fire situation is interesting, not only for the feelings it generated through social interaction, but also for the memories that were inspired. Memories were a striking personal artifact, promoting tales, and positive feelings of the early years. The expressions were part of a distinct sense of nostalgia which was evidenced through a variety of means. These walks through the past, with the amusement and emotion that they retrieved, were a valuable consequence of Guiding. As predominantly positive recollections, the memories had a significant impact as articulated by one of the older women:

> Now at my age, I would say the memories, just talking about it takes me back and then I think, here it is now sixty years later and I still remember all these wonderful things that happened [at camp], and you looked forward to it so much....It would have to be now, looking back, the memories that I have, such wonderful memories, more nice memories, more really pleasant memories of Guide camp than of I think almost ... any other part of my life (Shirley, LF).

Across the generations, women would recall camp tales of hilarious situations, times of "overcoming adversity" in rain and snow, and many other adventures. In instances where

friends had been involved in a company together, the impact was acknowledged: "The Guiding connection, you have memories together...we do a lot of reminiscing". The fond memories of camp were also cited as a significant factor in encouraging Fiona, for example, to camp again, "in terms of wanting to do it now with my kids".

In addition to the memories, keepsakes such as camp photographs and camp crafts were meaningful artifacts of the early years. In one instance, a treasured possession was a plant book which was an important keepsake as well as a useful teaching aid in subsequent years. In other instances, camp crafts were valuable artifacts, particularly for two women who defined themselves as creative:

> We made this vase where you took a glass jar and you had five million pieces of tissue and you glued them on the vase. My mother has that vase...now that was worthwhile (Helen, TPP).

> I remember one year we made a key chain thing, it's something my parents have still got, made out of a paintbrush thing. I remember really enjoying looking through and deciding which ones I could work on (Fiona, TPP).

Photographs of camp were also popular sources of recall, and were often shown during the interviews. The photographs prompted recollections of camp tales and special events; "the names have faded, but I have really positive memories. The pictures help".

In whatever manner, whether via keepsakes or memories, the power of nostalgia made an enormous impact that was evidenced across the generations. The positive memories for some women provided the inspiration to continue or re-establish an interest in the outdoor world; however for most, nostalgia was a really positive gain in and of itself.

Summary: Broader influences

The outdoor experiences had a major impact at a personal level, enhancing self-confidence and self-esteem, encouraging social interaction, and providing a strong sense of nostalgia. Even for those women who chose not to participate in the outdoor world in subsequent years, their experiences as teenagers in the Guiding organization informed their sense of self in a very positive manner. The impact of the outdoor experiences thus extended far beyond a physical interaction with the physical environment.

Questions of Aspiration and Potential

The extent to which Guiding encouraged or defined levels of potential proved to inspire common feelings which were extremely positive:

> [Guiding] pushed me, it definitely didn't set limits. It makes you think you can do more and only you is holding yourself back...in fact it's really opened up a lot of areas that you wouldn't even have thought of doing, things you wouldn't do without some kind of push (Irene, TPP).

The sentiment that Guiding "presented you with the feeling that you could do anything" was expressed across the generations. Guiding had nurtured the belief that the outdoor world was a source of unlimited potential that was possible if it was desired. The common declarations similar to the above were interesting in view of a number of facts. Firstly, very few women actively sought to participate in activities beyond the Guiding framework (camping, hiking, fires etc). Secondly, when questioned about what women would or would not be prepared to try, the "wouldn't do's" included predominantly "doing stuff on my own" and the "risk" activities, such as mountaineering, rock climbing, and white water activities.

> I'm not a sensation seeker...That was probably more just me as a person...You know, I'd take the path up the mountain, I just wouldn't do the face of the mountain with ropes. Like it's probably very safe...it wouldn't be something I'd do even as I know the safety is there (Angela, YK);
>
> I'm too chicken (Laura, TPP);
>
> In terms of my personality, those risk taking things would not have been my style (Fiona, TPP);
>
> Not my nature, I wasn't that independent (Dawn, YK).

The opinions of the "risk" activities were often based upon a preconceived notion of what the activity would be like, with only a couple of women actually having experienced mountaineering or climbing. The recourse to personal characteristics was a consistent factor in women's explanation of their limits. Although the "I can do anything" expressions of confidence and competence were frequent, the apologetic cries of "I wasn't that independent", "it wasn't my thing" or " it would not have been my style" followed with an equivalent strength.

In a manner similar to the feelings of competence identified earlier, women's expressions of their potential in the outdoor world were hypothetical rather than a reflection of reality. "I can do anything" and "I don't have any limits" were both perspectives related to competence, moulded by the Guiding experiences. The reality of women's experiences indicated that their subsequent outdoor activities were carried out within the same framework as Guiding. Participation in the "risk" activities was something that was not desired, however "I know a Guide who does...." was a frequent phrase that distanced Guiding from what were identified as personally constructed limits.

Access to expertise

In order to pursue the notion of women's potential, it is first necessary to establish what encouraged women to venture beyond the Guiding framework. Of the group of twenty women, only six had ventured beyond the Guiding format of organized camping and hiking, four of whom comprised the Not-impressed group, with the other two being the single members of the Thirty-plus-and-positive group. For these women, a crucial factor in encouraging participation was the presence of a significant person who had a particular outdoor interest and expertise. The "experts" included partners, parents, friends and

acquaintances:

> My husband's really into the mountains and climbing and stuff, so actually I've done a whole lot more since I was married and it's more through his influence than I think anything I picked up from Guides (Phyllis, NI).

> I was introduced to [the Sierra Club] by one of the girls that I worked with..and so through them I started doing a bit of kayaking and a bit of backpacking" (Karen, TPP).

The experts provided a gateway into other spheres of participation that were not necessarily part of the Guiding curriculum. The levels of experience prior to this varied enormously, indicating that experience was not a prerequisite for success in subsequent endeavours. The most active woman was one of the few who had no outdoor experiences in her teenage years either with Guiding or other agencies. In contrast, Karen's experiences in the Sierra Club were felt to be an extension of Guiding in that Guiding "provided the inspiration to go on and do more"; a framework from which this further experience was developed.

Whether serendipitous or not, the access to such expertise provided the necessary encouragement to branch out, and not knowing where to access people was a limitation if further exploration was desired: "Maybe if I knew someone who was really keen on [mountaineering] I'd get introduced to it in a different kind of way" (Dawn, YK).

The Guiding context

In addition to the access to expertise, the context within which Guiding activities were placed is worth considering. The opportunity to participate in "risky" activities was not part of the organizational mandate. With this in mind, alternative experiences would be very far removed from the Guiding experiences: "You're just taught the basics and survival skills and stuff" (Angela, YK). Guiding experiences promoted outdoor living skills, not technical mastery of specific pursuits. To quote the Policy Organization and Rules once again:

> Outdoor activities, including camping provide opportunities for fun, adventure and challenge; create a love of a healthy outdoor life, an appreciation of the beauty and wonder of nature (Girls Guides of Canada, 1992, p.3).

The implications of the Guiding objectives becomes apparent when considering the definitions that women ascribed to the nature of their experiences. If one considers the way in which the experiences were defined, these were seldom physical expectations. Outdoor participation was defined in emotive terms such as enjoyment, coupled with an appreciatory element of the environment, whereas a physical expectation was seldom expressed. The appreciatory aspect of the experience was the dominant emphasis for many women, with the physical representing a means to an end rather than an end in itself. The outdoors were thus seen in a very different context to the more technical outdoor pursuits. Comparison to the more active members of the Not-impressed group clarifies this, in the sense that their expectations of outdoor participation incorporated a physical interaction as a priority. "Interaction with the physical world in a physical way" was how the activity was rationalised.

In much the same way, the tendency for women to steer away from solitary experiences could be explained by the emphasis within the Guiding experiences on social situations:

> Most of my experiences were communal...I suppose I've mostly associated camping as a communal activity..you want someone to be there to get excited with if you see something or observing something (Dawn, YK).

For most women, outdoor participation occurred within the presence of some social unit, be it family, friends or Guiding. Thus, for some women, subsequent outdoor participation was initiated with membership in a social unit, and ceased once the social unit had moved on, be this a circle of friends, family, or a Guide company. The outdoor world was defined in a social rather than physical context, a situation that in Dawn's case discouraged solitary activity. This is an important point when one considers that some of the younger women, such as Dawn, felt that a way to re-establish a level of participation in the outdoor world would be through a return to the Guiding organization in a leadership capacity. Rather than seek alternative agencies, the positive and familiar elements of the Guiding experiences were how the definitions of the outdoor world was constructed, and thus framed the nature of the subsequent experiences that were pursued.

Personal emphasis and reality

Guiding is recognised as encouraging "the moon" (Roberta Bondar, a former Girl Guide, was certainly close to this goal), yet the reality of women's aspirations is defined and limited through the recourse to a personal apologetic. Competence and confidence swiftly disappear, a situation that is troubling when one considers that this is made in reference to the male dominated risk-related outdoor activities.

When located within the Guiding context, the way in which the experiences are defined in an emotional rather than physical manner distances these experiences from the more risk-related pursuits. It becomes difficult to assess how Guiding can encourage women to participate in the risk pursuits when they remain so far removed from the experiences that are provided. The personal apologetic however remains problematic, and would appear to be an issue that extends beyond the scope of the Guiding experiences.

In a broader context, the complexities and contradictions of women's lived experiences reflect the "contradictory subject positions" that women occupy throughout their lives (Jones, 1993). The Guiding culture conveys a specific set of meanings which "provide both limitations and possibilities for what women...can do and be, and how they can understand themselves" (Jones, 1993, p.159). Different experiences will promote a different set of images at a personal level, as evidenced here with reference to limits. The subject is complex, and requires a much more expansive analysis of how women place themselves in differing contexts; who are they outside of the Guiding culture?

Implications of organizational limitations

An issue that arises from this discussion of limits is the question of where girls go if the Guiding activities are not what they desire? In this study, Nora was the only woman

who left the organization because it was unable to accommodate her desire for more adventurous pursuits. Her situation was resolved through membership in a more active organization, as well as having parents who were active in the outdoor world. This begs the question of where do girls go if they want the more "adventurous" activities that Guiding doesn't offer, and the opportunities given to Nora aren't available? The answer according to current debates would be "join the Scouts" (Howell, 1992); however, discussion of the Girl Guides as a single-sex organization in the next chapter will question this attitude. Due to the nature of the study, the women who could provide an insight into this problem did not respond to the advertisements, and may be the source for further research.

Summary

The outdoor experiences in the teenage years of Guiding influenced women in a number of ways. For some women, activity was encouraged through the exposure to outdoor experiences. For most however, participation was influenced by the way in which outdoor experiences were defined. This served to encourage as well as discourage participation, and was a highly subjective interpretation of the early experiences.

In a broader sense, the outdoor knowledge and skills were important factors of the early years that nurtured a sense of competence. Associated with success, this competence was a component that enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem. These were a number of influences to the personal that incorporated social, physical and nostalgic factors.

Although women were ready to acknowledge levels of competence in the outdoor world, their potential to venture beyond the frame of the Guiding experiences was denied through the recourse to personal characteristics. The impact of Guiding in this situation was difficult to assess on the basis that the experiences described were qualitatively different and beyond the nature of the organizational mandate. The social and appreciatory contexts within which the Guiding experiences were framed defined the parameters of women's participation to an certain extent, distancing women from risk-taking, more adventurous and physical outdoor experiences.

Chapter 6

THE IMPACT OF SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES

In this chapter, I discuss how factors specific to the Guiding organization influenced the outdoor experiences in the teen years, and whether these had an impact in subsequent years. I deal first with personal leadership experiences within the outdoor context. In the second section, I examine the impact of badges, certification and the Guide leaders, and discuss some generational issues that arose within these spheres. In the final section, I discuss the single-sex nature of the organization, and the impact this had in shaping the early experiences in particular. For all of these factors, the emphasis is placed specifically upon the outdoor component of Guiding. Where appropriate, however, the broader context of the organization is considered.

Leadership Experiences

Most women had some leadership experience, although the extent and nature of their experiences varied. The one area that inspired the most discussion was that of adult leadership. These adult experiences made a considerable impression on women's participation in the outdoor world. As a result, this discussion incorporates both teenage and adult leadership experiences and discusses how these functioned within the outdoor context. Although venturing beyond the initial objective of the research in the sense of including adult Guiding experiences, the voices are most definitely worth hearing.

Leadership experiences in the teen years

Fourteen of the twenty women had some leadership experience in their teen years, comprising for most the position of patrol leader in the company, or as a Cadet or Brownie leader in the late teens. All women in the Young-and-keen and Thirty-plus-and-positive groups had undertaken this responsibility and were very positive about this experience. It was "just wonderful", "a significant position," and carried with it "a sense of pride"; "it's the only time in my life I've been handed that sort of authority on the basis of what I could do". These experiences were recognised as a very important part of the whole Guiding experience, presenting challenges, "honing people skills", and generally "instrumental" for both personal and social development.

Within the context of the outdoor experiences, however, the teenage leadership experiences seldom incorporated the same degree of responsibility that was ascribed in the regular meetings. The outdoor work, and camping in particular, was a domain where the Guiders were in control, and responsibilities in a leadership capacity were minimal. Teenage leadership and the outdoors were thus separate spheres of involvement, and seldom did the two merge. For those who did have some responsibility, this was often fairly superficial and related to chores that involved "housekeeping" under canvas; "keeping the tents in order"

(Fiona, TPP).

The only women who were encouraged to meld the two aspects of Guiding were a couple of the Young-and-keen whose experiences in Pathfinders involved organizing camps for small groups. For these women, the recognition of the accomplishment was "a big deal" at a personal level:

> The lesson I learnt most from the camp was what it's like to be a leader and be responsible for people. It wasn't the camping, you'd done all those things...you'd done about fifteen camps before you did that...it's not the same thing, and what you get from it, it's not the surviving, it's just being responsible, getting other people going, and you realise that everything that happens comes from the flesh, like all the enthusiasm comes from you...What it is to be that kind of leader and get a group of people going and set a program and that you have to be flexible with it once you get there cause it might snow on Sunday morning when we're supposed to go for your nature walk (Christine, YK).

These camps represented a leadership goal that was located outside of the outdoor context. The outdoor environment was the stage through which the exercise was enacted, presenting challenging situations that would not have occurred in the regular meetings.

Leadership experiences as adults

In their study of "women outdoors", Yerkes and Miranda questioned: "Where are the mothers? Where are the older women?" (1987, p.51). My study would point the finger at Guiding and announce: "Here!"

Eight women returned to the organization in adulthood and spent some time as leaders. There was a gap in time between leaving the organization as teens, and returning as adults, and the reasons for joining were predominantly because of a daughter's involvement. All of the Lifers, Helen (TPP), Irene (TPP), and Emma (YK), dedicated two years or more to the organization to work in a leadership capacity, and were involved in running company camps during this time. The women were all extremely positive about their adult experiences, and certainly for some, the impact of those experiences was "huge":

> I remembered [Guiding as a kid] as a fun time in my life...but I don't think it made a great deal of difference in my life. I think as an adult, being a Guider made a change in my life, very, very distinct, a real positive influence in my life (Pat, LF).

As a group, the Lifers who had dedicated ten or more years to the organization, regarded their adult Guiding experiences as something that had transformed their lives, the impact being felt at a personal as well as practical level. Many women had been shy and credited the adult Guiding experiences with developing the confidence "to say what I think and not sit back". What had initially started as a result of a daughter's participation made a transition to an active personal involvement that existed beyond the family domain.

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, much of the Lifers' personal outdoor participation occurred through their activity as company leaders. The camping and outdoor commitment was something to which women invested a great deal of time and energy. For Shirley and Olivia, the Guide camps were the only times in adulthood in which "primitive" camping was

carried out. Camping was not something that they sought to experience with the family or other agencies. In these circumstances, the commitment to Guide camping was often difficult to articulate:

> I took [the company] camping, and the next year, same thing. It was just like you know, you go on holidays, you look forward to your holidays. If I were to ask you what makes you want to go on holiday, then that would be the same question as me, why do I want to take Guides to camp. It's just something you do, you want to do, you don't have to do certainly, but you just go on holidays, you just go on camp. It's funny, because a camping family we never were, we don't even own a tent...I don't know why, I guess I just liked it.

Not only did the organizational commitment encourage an active outdoor participation that lasted up to twenty-five years, the benefits of leadership extended beyond this. The experiences encouraged women to learn and maintain new skills and knowledge. Placed in a teaching situation, "you had to stay one step ahead by doing the work beforehand, you had to have more knowledge" (Rachel, LF). In this capacity, women's outdoor skills were "honed" and maintained concurrently, building up the competence and confidence to teach. This was particularly important for Pat and Rachel, both of whom had little or no outdoor experience in their teen years. In addition, the sense of achievement resulting from taking a group of girls to camp was underlined by the recognition that:

> It's an awful responsibility to go out in an area and be responsible for twenty four girls or more, to be responsible for their safety. It's pretty awesome when you stop and think about it" (Rachel, LF).

Beyond the formal Guiding environment, a significant benefit of the adult leadership experiences came from the social networks that were created through Guiding. Coupled with opportunities made available through leadership, the network of Guiding friends paved the way to a greatly enhanced outdoor life:

> I learnt to ski at the age of fifty...I had two very good friends that were Guiders and a lady from Calgary and the four of us went and we took a couple of lessons a couple of times down in Sunshine. Skied in the mountains, Marmot and Lake Louise...this was lots of fun...I backpacked for years, I really loved that. We went to Kananaskis, Lake O'Hara, Elk Point in BC...All the backpacking friends were Guiding people (Pat, LF).

As leaders, the Guiding network was an important agency for women who wished to participate in the outdoors beyond the context of the organization and the family. The network provided access to both people (expertise) and opportunities, neither of which were felt to have been available through other channels. Although it is not possible to generalise from this small sample, these women present a useful insight into some older women's outdoor experiences, a group who are usually either invisible (Yerkes and Miranda, 1987), or identified as inactive due to the absence of friends or family with whom to recreate (Henderson and Bialeschki, 1993).

The extent to which the Guiding network was utilised varied, yet for someone like Pat, it was a significant resource in that "probably 75 percent of my friends are Guiders".

These were women whom she had met in her position as an adult leader. Although the more active pursuits had ceased due to medical conditions, her golfing and bridge friends came from a Guiding background. One of these good friends was the woman with whom she had carried out most of her Guide camps.

In a broader context, the network gained through adult leadership held particular significance for women other than the Lifer's. Helen's (TPP) resolution of a mid-life crisis was assisted through tapping contacts made through her leadership years:

> I never expected to have a mid-life crisis. One of the things I realised was that I had no friends, and so three years ago I made a conscious effort to accumulate or acquire a circle of friends that had nothing to do with anyone else in the family, and a number of those people, the lady across the street is a lady I met through Guiding, the other lady I walk with is a lady from Guiding, so if it hadn't been for Guiding, and the fact that I was already there, I wouldn't have had the acquaintances to consciously choose those people from.

The women such as Helen who utilized the network in a supportive sense illustrate how crucial it was in the resolution of their personal circumstances. As a resource that existed and as something that was personally controlled, "nothing to do with anyone else in the family", the Guiding network was subsumed into women's lives if the need arose, and for those concerned, this was an important part of the adult leadership experiences.

For those women who dedicated an extended period of time to adult leadership, the organization represented an agency for outdoor participation, a network of people resources and a support system, and provided opportunities to develop in a personal sense beyond the boundaries of the family unit for those who were parents. Opportunity, experience and fun would probably summarize the adult leadership experiences, however, the best account is provided by Pat:

> I was an extremely shy person and I eventually became in a place where I had to give speeches, I had to give talks, and that was to me a real asset. I think I went to places that I'd never have been to. I've been to Ontario with Guiding, I've been backpacking, sailing camps, a honey factory, the post office, the planetarium. I did a lot of things that I would never have done...I just feel that I was given lots of opportunities to do things I never would have done. I think because I got so many good things given to me, this is why I want to give some of it back. Guiding was very good to me, it opened all kinds of doors.

Specific Features

Badges, certification and female leaders were part of the Guiding experience that made it quite different from other outdoor practices. The badges were a recognition of achievements during the teen years, and were often part of larger awards such as the Canada cord and the All-round cord that girls worked towards. Certification was a part of the adult leadership experience, and represented an outdoor qualification. This was a requirement if women wished to take their company camping, and therefore had quite a different emphasis to the badges of the early years.

The all-female policy of the organization ensured that girls were taught exclusively by female leaders throughout the program, a significant difference from mainstream outdoor education and recreation.

Badges and certification

Unlike the positive consensus ascribed to leadership experiences, the impact of badges was very mixed, with minimal reference made to the outdoor component. The major awards such as the All-round cord or the Canada-cord provided the motivation to reach a particular goal and also continue in the organization. For the women who received these awards, they were "milestones" and in terms of skills, provided a "recognition of mastery". Of badges in general the consensus varied from "the more you had on your arm, the more you had accomplished", to tasks that did not inspire or motivate, not being "one to jump through hoops". Very few women remembered undertaking any outdoor related badges in their teens; the outdoor experience rather than the achievements of accreditation seemed to be what women recalled.

The greatest impact of badges or certification was in the area of adult leadership, in particular the Camp Leaders Certificate (CLC). Logistically, the CLC made an impact because it "made going to camp so much easier". For the women who were committed to leadership on the basis of the outdoor component, the camp leadership certificate represented a big achievement:

> A landmark. To me it was a real achievement cause camping had always meant so much to me, then to have this sort of outside acknowledgement that I could do it was a wonderful thing (Emma, YK);
>
> It was terribly important to me. That's what Guiding was all about. The other stuff was nice too, but it was the camping, that's why I really got involved in it (Pat, LF).

The sentiments regarding the CLC were exclusive to the women who had achieved that goal. Helen and Irene, both TPP's, did not share these sentiments at all. Neither had the certificate, but had been involved in a large number of camps in various capacities. Both were extremely cynical about the process of the CLC: "I have never heard of anyone not getting their certificate even under quite horrendous slip-ups". Both women felt strongly about the pursuit of excellence in the outdoors, and ensuring that Guiders were highly competent, but felt that this was something that the CLC could not guarantee. Although extremely enthusiastic about the outdoor experiences, they felt that the certification process was a part of the program that was highly problematic.

Badges and certification thus played little role in the outdoor experiences in the younger years. In the broader context of the program, the women who felt that badges were important saw them as a recognition of their accomplishments. At an adult leadership level, the CLC had a major significance for those whose commitment was rationalised through the outdoor participation. For others however, the process was seen as problematic, and will be discussed shortly in reference to a sign of the times.

Guide leaders: Dragons, stodgies and role models

Female leaders or "role models", as much of the literature tells us, is what women "need". From discussions in this study, women's comments reflect a mixture of positive, negative and neutral opinions regarding their female leaders. Their recollections included any one of the following:

> The leaders were dragons (Olivia, LF);
>
> One I remember we all thought was a dud, and the other one ran a very tight ship (Fiona, TPP);
>
> To me [the leader] was an old stodgy (Nora, NI);
>
> A group of housewives from suburbia...women who are striving for something (Christine, YK);
>
> Heather, she is clearly the person who had the most impact on me in my adolescent years...my life is different because of her (Emma, YK);
>
> She was the person that made the most influence in my life (Shirley, LF).

For every leader who was remembered as a woman to emulate or admire, there was another who had a negative and often destructive influence. In between the extremes were leaders who were remembered as strict and regimental/military, or simply as "nice" people. As a group, the Young-and-keen were the only ones who remembered their leaders in a positive manner. The three other groups had mixed feelings, with the Not-impressed leaning toward the negative.

In the context of the outdoor experiences, the women who had bad experiences at camp, and the Young-and-keen group were the few to identify the leaders as having any impact. For the Young-and-keen, particularly with reference to Pathfinder experiences, the leaders played an important part in providing support where necessary, building up confidence, and "slowly getting us ready for the responsibilities". The Guide leaders remained on the periphery; their input was subtle, and yet for this group, represented an important element in the build-up to experiences such as the wilderness camps.

Helen (TPP) and Janice (NI), who had bad camping experiences, were not at all positive about their leaders:

> [At camp] I pouted the whole time. I had a sister a year older than me and we were both made junior officers or whatever and our Guide leader decided that wasn't right and left my sister there and made me go back into one of the tents...After the camp I just didn't go back (Janice, NI).
>
> I quit [Guides] in a hostile situation because I wouldn't camp. I would happily go to Guides for the rest of my life, but I wouldn't camp, and I was simply told by the leader...if I wasn't going to camp, I couldn't complete the program, I might as well quit, so I did...I think my biggest regret is that I didn't have a leader who could see my problem and help me through it (Helen, TPP).

For Helen in particular, there was still much resentment towards this particular leader because other than camping, her Guiding experiences had been very positive. In retrospect, the situation was seen in a positive sense in that "it's given me a lot of understanding as a Brownie leader taking kids to camp". In the long term however, Helen was put off camping for life, and her leader was a major factor in that situation.

Janice's circumstances were part of an ongoing set of confrontations with her leader which led her to the conclusion that "I don't think she liked me". The consequence of these confrontations was a miserable camp, and an early retirement from the organization. She did, however, have a very positive experience on the first of her two camp experiences. This camp was marked by the presence of a different leader who was extremely positive and credited as a reason for going back to camp the next year:

> The leader was like an ideal women and we were all kind of taken with her. I recall she was attractive, she was in charge, she knew all of the songs, she could play all of the sports...She was sort of like a role model, not really for Guiding but just as a person, so I was intrigued and wanted to see how people like that lived...I didn't realize that there was more than teaching and nursing as women's careers, so I don't think there was much in the way of role modelling or people encouraging me in terms of what we might be..When I look back on it now, I think it would have been nice to have a stronger sense of what woman was, rather than how to look after the kids...so when there was a woman acting independently, it was worth a lot of admiration...She was a week in our lives, but we all admired her greatly.

The positive images of "what we might be" were not a common characteristic of women's descriptions of their leaders; Janice was the only woman who identified such an impact. Other leaders made an impression, although the relationship was more akin to that of a teacher/advisor and pupil. In this regard, leaders helped to boost self-confidence, offered words of advice or encouragement, and were supportive in appropriate situations. Their impact was seldom recognised in the outdoor context. Women's outdoor participation was not necessarily encouraged through these leaders; the gains were equally positive and negative in that sense.

A sign of the times

The discussion of leadership issues, certification and badges promoted comments from the respondents that indicated some generational changes in the organization. The key ingredient was the reference to the "old guard"; women who were remembered as old stodgies, dragons, or overly military. These women were remembered as keeping girls in line, following military codes of conduct, and providing little or no room for negotiation. Not all women were in favour of these practices, but for some, the old guard were the bastions of the "good old days" of Guiding, "a sign of the times". Those were the days when "we had it tough" epitomised the Guiding experience, yet were seen as a positive and fundamental part of Guiding.

The good old days were further lamented by some women with reference to the outdoors. "In those days, a hike was an adventure", far removed from the present day policy of preparation, planning and parental consent. The general complaints were basically as follows:

> When I was a kid and we camped, that was rugged...nothing stopped us. The way of camping thirty five years ago was very military. The girls liked it...Camps nowadays are much more flexible. If we were scheduled to swim in a cold mountain lake on a Monday morning we went, even in pouring rain...there was no backing down on the schedule in those days...If we [had] to climb Old Baldie, we climbed Old Baldie, there was no getting out of it, and if someone had a twisted ankle, two other Guides would help her up the hill and she would get there...I don't remember much compassion...It was different...I didn't happen to think I was particularly abused... I'm not that high on certification... A bunch of grown women should be able to use their heads in how they're going to handle a situation rather than having to fill out all the pages and pages of the camp documents, planning, budget itinerary...What used to be a Saturday afternoon hike is now a big deal with waivers, location, times, lunch stops... It seems that common sense is missing in the whole thing (Irene, TPP).

> One of the trouble with Guiding is that I don't know that all the kids are getting that [outdoor] background and that's the disadvantage of having the Guides with the whistles and the saluting and the marching all retire, because those people did teach for excellence. As the old guard have retired, the people who have taken over do not have the expertise, and I do not want the outdoor part of the program to be lost. I think that with new leaders, what's happened is that we are overwhelmed with woosies...as a leader you can't continue to expect "I survived" as excellence. I think that for whatever reason the leaders are feeling that way (Helen, TPP).

The criticisms of the organization came from the Thirty-plus-and-positive group, and in particular, from the two women who had the most recent contact with the organization as leaders. These women were in a position where they existed on the boundary between the old and new. Irene acknowledged that "I don't know why, but we always looked forward to camp", and Helen had an extremely negative camping experience, nevertheless both felt that the "modern" camping experience left a lot to be desired.

The comments indicate changes in leadership style, changes in the relationship between Guide and leader, and a response to the professionalization of the outdoor world, the negative impacts of which were seen from a perspective of adult leadership. The job of being a leader was different with the emphasis placed on qualifications, legal documents and so on. This reduced the spontaneity of outdoor activities; they were restrictive in order to comply with the necessary legal regulations. Irene compared her Guiding leadership to her involvement with a church youth group: "We do a lot of [outdoor] group work with the kids at church, and we don't have any certification".

With a negotiated curriculum, the relationship between leaders and Guides was quite different. The criticisms related in part to the nature of "youth today", identifying factors of the current cultural climate. In this respect, both the loss of "youth" as well as societal restrictions were linked in what was a difficult situation to resolve. In some respects, this was related to the loss of innocence: "Kids grow up so much sooner these days". This premature adulthood was something that Guiding was encouraging:

> Since I've been involved there's been a conscious effort to move these girls into the modern times and treat them like modern women and not the way we were treated as Girl Guides (Irene,TPP).

The Guide/leader relationship was also affected by the organization's response to societal problems such as child abuse, a factor that was not an issue in previous decades. The impact of this affected Irene's work as a nurse. With new guidelines, she was not allowed to spend any time alone with a Guide; a witness had to be present whenever she was attending to a girl at camp. The relationship between Guide and Guider was once again changing, with leadership answerable to societal as well as organizational demands.

The underlying criticisms directed by the few women were basically recognising that the organization has changed. The encouragement of a negotiated camp program, acknowledgement and response to societal problems such as sexual abuse and drug abuse, and treating girls like adults, are all elements that are far removed from the organization's roots of moral reform. The younger women who were recipients of this more relaxed approach, definitely liked it, although they had differing opinions on the regimental and military associations that remained. The criticisms aired by Helen and Irene provide an interesting perspective to the dilemma of change as the organization undergoes a transitional phase.

Impact of the Single-Sex Organization

The extent to which the single-sex nature of the organization affected experiences was an issue that generated much discussion. Unlike much of the other material, the opinions derived from more than memories, incorporating life experiences and multiple positions. These opinions varied over the years, and were subject to ongoing change. The passage of time allowed women to look back and scrutinize their early experiences, and for some women, this enabled them to analyze why their time in the organization had such meaning.

A feature of the organization that should remain

The majority of women believed that the single-sex nature of Guiding was a determining factor of the organization:

> I think it's most important and yet I don't know why I say that...I cannot imagine Guides being co-ed and I cannot ever imagine having wanted to be in them if they had been...It would have no meaning I don't think (Shirley, LF).

Like Shirley, most women believed that Guiding was an organization that existed for women, and that was the way it should stay, although they were not always able to articulate the reasons why they felt this. This reflected the women's opinions in Varpolatai's (1992) study. The belief was something that was "felt", not necessarily explained, yet something that promoted very strong feelings about the whole issue.

The women across the generations had quite different reasons for their affirmations. Lifers had grown up in an age where girls and boys were segregated, and the thought of a co-ed experience was something that was beyond anything they had experienced. Thus, in many respects, the feelings were aroused through the shock of something that was completely alien. Guiding was single-sex, that's the way it was, and anything else was beyond

imagination.

The Young-and-keen recognised Guiding as a space that allowed girls' access to experiences "without the boys taking over"; freedom from the "vulnerability of interruption" (Henderson and Bialeschki, 1986). This was also recognized as an arena where girls learned that "we can do this as well as the boys can".

For the women in between these age groups, the sentiments were a mixture of those expressed by Lifer's and the Young-and-keen. There were also comments that recognized co-ed environments as intimidating, and identified Guiding as somewhere to go during "that phase" of teenage years prior to dating. For women who were parents, many of their reflections were made with reference to their children, their attitudes about the single-sex nature of the organization changing as they watched their children develop:

> Louise never would have taken on the leadership role against boys, and once she had an attitude, she would never have remained and persevered if it was mixed company...she could be a bitch, but it was all girls and she didn't have to deal with anything else...At this point for my children, it being an all girl organization was extremely important...and I can see that now and I couldn't see it, I really couldn't, and I didn't support it (Helen, TPP).

Women's opinions with regard to the single-sex status of the organization underwent change at different periods of their life. Working as a Guide leader, developing a feminist consciousness and the passage of time were all factors which had been instrumental in making women re-evaluate their opinions about the organization. In these situations, women's circumstances provided lived experiences to account for what they felt about the organization.

The change in women's perspective did have implications for those who worked as leaders. As an example, during her first years as a leader, Helen fought hard to encourage co-ed experiences. The combination of raising two teenage daughters, and the development of a feminist consciousness, led her to change her opinions over the years. She now fights equally hard to maintain the single-sex status.

A couple of women, Laura (TPP) and Brenda (YK), felt that there was no need to maintain the organization as single-sex. Their argument incorporated the sentiment that everything was now co-ed, and therefore it was time for the Scouts and Guides to join forces. From an economical point of view this was recognized as a more productive situation in both a financial and volunteer sense. It has to be said, however, that this was a minority opinion.

The differing, and often fluid, opinions that women have with regard to the importance of the single-sex organization provide an insight into the difficulties the organization is facing in its recent politicization. Varpolatai questions: "How does a women's organization address the concerns of a membership spread along a continuum encompassing feminist, liberal, and conservative positions" (in press, p.26). Considering the ever changing opinions of women such as Helen as they themselves are politicized, this is a difficult question to answer. Although the prevailing opinions may share a commonality, the rationalizations are very different.

Implications for outdoor participation

The single-sex environment made a significant contribution to women's participation, because over half of the women would not have participated in the outdoor activities if they had been mixed. These women were spread across the age ranges, and their opinions varied: it would be "unthinkable" (LF), "intimidating" (YK), and "I wouldn't have had the confidence"(TPP). Although the situation was presented in a hypothetical sense, these women were quite adamant that they would not have undertaken the activity.

The importance of the single-sex environment was often recognised when mixed camps or outdoor situations had been experienced. A comparison to the Guiding experiences indicated differences in personal involvement, the outcome of which was usually negative in the mixed settings. In the mixed situation, the tasks at camp were gendered. The camp fire was the domain of the males; likewise chopping of wood, and in some cases, the putting up of the tents. Women were in control of the domestic sphere. For many of the women, this had been a source of conflict which was seldom resolved. The consensus: "I tend to sit back and let them do it"..."whilst inside I'm seething". The opinions indicated that more often than not, the confrontation arising from undertaking a gender-typed activity in the outdoor setting was "not worth the effort". Of more concern however, was the manner in which some women were intimidated by the conflict, and thus sitting back was not realistically a choice, but a "survival" strategy. To quote Birrell (1984):

> Within integrated structures, women are who men allow us to be...As an accommodated class women located in integrated structures must continually legitimate our actions and our very presence to those who control those structures, and invariably those people are men. (p.25).

The source of confrontation lay specifically within the domestic arrangements of the outdoors, an issue that the work on co-ed experiences fails to incorporate (Green, 1987; Humberstone, 1986, 1990, 1990a, Humberstone and Lynch, 1990). From my personal teaching experiences I have numerous recollections of group conflict over the preparation of meals and such duties, all of which were located within the argument that cooking was "girl stuff". The examination of the "non-traditional" sphere is located with women's achievement in the male domain of outdoor/adventure pursuits; the "risky" activities. Humberstone (1990a) has addressed the issue of challenging boys' perceptions of girls' abilities, however the focus remains on the girls' abilities. At no point is the domestic sphere challenged, although the women in this study identify it as the most frustrating "gendered" sphere of their outdoor involvement.

The family experiences provided a different perspective to the mixed experiences. A few of the women identified that their outdoor experience was far greater than that of their partner which provided them with control over the situation. Nevertheless, the cooking and cleaning of the campsite was women's domain, a reproduction of the home situation which was not necessarily positive. The ordeal of having to prepare the family meals after a long day out was the factor that caused Rachel to stop camping; "it's no darn fun". Fiona had recollections of her mother "just feeling miserable...making meals and washing dishes...it can't have been much fun". These situations however did not create conflict, and were seen as "just the way things were".

This contradictory conflict/acceptance of the domestic sphere identifies the complexities of women's experience in which "women constantly take up contradictory

subject positions" (Jones, 1993, p.159) as leader, parent, mother, woman, and so on. Although Bialeschki and Henderson (1993) locate women's outdoor experiences within an "ethic of care", the differing and conflicting positions that women occupy indicate that this is far too simplistic an analysis, and requires further study.

The conflict and conflict avoidance experienced in mixed situations is not particularly encouraging. Whilst Humberstone (1986, 1990, 1990a) has shown that the co-ed environment can be extremely encouraging and informing for both girls and boys, the experiences she talks about relate to novices in the field. The women in this study have many years of experience behind them, so to face "defeat" after being nurtured through the Guiding program is most definitely problematic. Certainly when one considers the conflict arising from the later experiences, it becomes more clear why the support for the single-sex environment remains so strong.

Membership in a Girls' Club

An important factor of Guiding was identified as belonging to a "girls' club". In this environment, there was access to "girl knowledge" and girl secrets, as well as exposure to information and experiences that differentiated Guiding from other situations. Within this girls' club, the teaching was carried out using every day language and skills:

> The domestic tasks did not feel gendered because it was so outside of what it was, it was skills for life. It was girl knowledge...When we were tying a knot, they referred to a crochet loop. It was good enough knowledge to get you through something else (Christine, YK).

The incorporation of everyday knowledge was a useful tool that made the outdoor world more accessible. Thus the lowly crochet loop had its applications extended into the outdoor sphere, and provided a means by which to demystify the experience. Jordan (1990) has identified the need to be aware of gender-identified language in outdoor/experiential education, however, the incorporation of everyday knowledge mentioned by Christine suggests that the issue of semantics ventures beyond this. The systematic translation of "outdoor language" into a more accessible form, namely, "girl" language, was a means by which outdoor skills were made both accessible, and applicable to other spheres of experience, an asset that is worth considering in the broader context of outdoor education and recreation.

In the camp setting, everyone was involved in all of the tasks and learned how to live outdoors in a context that was not gendered. The environment created a situation where girls were not in the situation where they had to deal with "stereotypes": "The division of labour completely changes when you're in an all girl group". Within the single-sex situation, the context of the traditionally gendered activities was nullified; tasks were thus seen in a functional context. The impact was evident at both a personal and functional level:

> If you don't get exposed to the "of course women can put up tents and of course the women can all organize the camp and the women can do all this quite nicely" then you don't necessarily have the confidence that you can do it (Dawn, YK).

Ironically, the benefits of this non-gendered environment were specific to the single-

sex setting. Outside of the Guiding culture, the realities of outdoor living in the mixed setting were very different as mentioned earlier. Thus, whilst making the outdoor world accessible and understandable in a semantic sense, the realities of the world were somewhat harsh and often required more than the confidence that these Guiding experiences developed.

In a more cheerful vein, a highly regarded aspect of the single-sex environment was the way in which it was defined as a "safe space". Coupled with the associated girl knowledge, the space provided somewhere to learn "at your own pace". "We were never pushed" and "you were given the chance to make mistakes". "I think with things like fire building there's practice. If I hadn't had the chance to practice, I wouldn't have got better". The space was associated with the absence of boys, and in a sense of them not getting in the way, there were more specific impacts of this space:

> In the 50s, girls in those days, you were supposed to act like ladies...especially around adults and boys. If you were a whole group of girls you didn't have to act like a lady. You could just turn cartwheels and climb trees, I doubt if I would have climbed trees with a bunch of boys standing round. I think our words, our actions would have been restricted because we would have been expected to conduct ourselves as a lady. Without the boys we didn't have to...It was like sacred girl territory (Irene,TPP).

The sentiments that Irene expressed were just one of many feelings that related to a sense of personal identity. The single-sex environment was a place where you could "just be yourself", an impact that was evidenced across the generations.

The feeling of self-identity reflected a couple of facets, the most significant of which was:

> I felt like I could take grips and really be myself because when, I just had this thing where I flashed on school again and I was so alienated from myself in trying to fit into that social, like this push-pull of trying to be what the boys want you to be (Emma, YK).

Guiding provided girls with a space to define their personal identity, where they did not have to conform to the expectations of being a "lady" or "what the boys want you to be". In a physical sense, referring back to the last chapter, the outdoors also provided the space to develop the sense of the physical self, whether this was the opportunity to "turn cartwheels" or to have a sense of "being strong". Thus, the personal images of physical and social expectations were placed within a very different context and re-evaluated.

An equally popular comment regarding identity recognised Guiding as somewhere that girls could go to fill "the void". The void was "that part of life before boys"; the "phase" when girls detested brothers or other male peers. This was a space once again that created room to recreate before boys came on the scene. The assumption underlying these sentiments was that of a heterosexual ideal and inevitability; Guiding satisfied a period in a girl's life before she discovered boyfriends. Guiding as a leisure pursuit ceased with the onset of "dating" (Janice, NI). Although this was not the norm with this group, the pattern reflects the findings by researchers such as Christine Griffin (1986) with regard to the transition of a girl's leisure to that of her boyfriend.

The "cool" factor

As a final word, the cool factor was something that was very much a part of the discussions of the single-sex environment. Across the generations, women related tales of how Guiding was not "cool", and being a Guide was not something that was readily declared. For some, this caused a great deal of internal conflict:

> It was a real conflict for me because Guides was so important to me but it wasn't cool, and so I would die of embarrassment if anybody knew I was in Guides, so in school I would try and be everything that you were supposed to be, cool, and then I felt like I could be myself when I was with the kids in Guides. It created a real conflict...I wished that I didn't care as much about Guides so that I could have quit, but I just couldn't, and then I would wish that it was so uncool, and I just hoped and prayed that no-one would ever see me anywhere that I would be embarrassed (Emma, YK).

As Guides, girls were ridiculed, embarrassed, and went to measures such as carrying uniforms in paper bags to their meetings in order not to be recognized. The pressure to leave the organization was for some women enormous, yet such were the personal gains that this was not possible. This "cool" factor is an important concept because it illustrates how girls were prepared to maintain their participation counter to the mainstream (and highly influential) tide of popular culture. The defense of the organization was often an important stage in the "affirmation of belief" in the organization:

> I remember being at school, guys would say:"oh yeah you went camping, oh yeah, oh sure, out in the back yard", well no, actually we were out wilderness camping this weekend, and when was the last time you went?...I can remember derogatory comments that women were the leaders and they can't do things, and then you find yourself defending them and thinking, well, they are women, so what...why shouldn't it be valuable just cause it's women? (Dawn, YK).

The comments that women made with regard to the "safe space" and personal identity provide an insight into why Guiding was held in such high regard: "Nobody made fun of me...and although I never had really good friends in Guides, it was the one place I went where everybody liked everybody and they liked me" (Helen, TPP). Representing a space where "I could just be myself", the organization was a location where women's identity could be defined. The single-sex factor was a major part of this, with much of the strength of experience gained through the homosocial network. As Christine (YK) mentioned: "I wasn't a person for female primary relationships and girl groups in school, never really liked girls, never trusted them, but I always felt that my Guiding friends were different people from those people". Guiding was "special" and highly valued, and maybe this is why the women who stayed maintained their links for so long, and often into adulthood.

The cool factor is a worthy issue to pursue, because it accentuates the pressures that girls are under to conform to the mainstream youth cultures. The positive benefits of the single-sex environment play a large role in overcoming the cool factor, and as such present a powerful characteristic of the organization. Varpolatai (in press) mentions that there has been little documentation "of what it is that proves to be so valuable in the lives of these girls and women" (p.4). I would suggest that the issues that derive from the single-sex nature

of the organization provide an indicator, and are most definitely worth pursuing in greater depth.

Summary

The discussion of factors specific to the organization have identified a number of important issues that influence girls' and women's outdoor participation.

Leadership experiences as teens did not play a major part in the outdoor experiences. The gains were felt to be in the broader context of the Guiding experience and represented a positive component of the overall experience. Leadership positions as adults were seen to have had an enormous impact on those women who had committed a lengthy time to the organization. These were, for some, lifeshaping experiences. In the outdoor context, participation was encouraged within and outside the organization. Access to expertise provided women with opportunities that would not have been available elsewhere.

Similar to leadership, the impact of badges and certification within the outdoor context was felt to be greatest for adult leadership certificates. These provided an acknowledgement of women's ability in the outdoors. They also made the process of going to camp much easier.

Leaders had a variety of impacts including both positive and negative. These were seldom portrayed as women to emulate. Unlike the "role model" theories that abound in the literature, leaders were equally as destructive as constructive.

The single-sex nature of the organization was probably one of the most significant aspects of the experiences and the organizational factor that had the most impact in terms of participation. In a broader context, the issues of a safe space and identity were crucial, and have implications beyond the scope of this study.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, I return to the questions asked in Chapter 1, and briefly discuss the outcome of the central and secondary aims. This is followed by a summary of the implications for future research, and where this leads in my personal quest to encourage girls and women's participation in the outdoors.

Central Aim

My aim was to determine whether the outdoor component of Guiding influenced the lives of former Girl Guides. The answer would be a most definite "yes".

Since leaving Guides as teens, the majority of women had undertaken some form of outdoor participation. The nature of their involvement incorporated a wide variety of experiences ranging from a commitment to maintain outdoor-related knowledge, to extensive backpacking and mountaineering experiences. Women's commitment to the outdoor world was anything from a passive and sporadic interaction to a thrice-weekly physical engagement. What women did, how often, and how they rationalised it, was completely subjective.

Women's participation was influenced by their Guiding experiences. For many women, the impact was emotional rather than physical. Guiding encouraged women to interact with the outdoor world in an appreciatory and emotive manner, and to incorporate the outdoor world into their lifestyle. Participation in the outdoor world was defined as a fun and social occasion in the primitive outdoor environment, and this very much reflected how women pursued later activity. There was a subjective meaning ascribed to the outdoor world that was a significant factor in determining whether women would continue or not.

The personal development that was encouraged through Guiding made an enormous impression upon some women, in particular, those who were shy or lacked self-confidence. The long-term experiences developed a level of competence which was instrumental in the enhancing of self-confidence and esteem. The social environment of the camp enhanced women's social skills, and the common allegiance to the organization was a factor in nurturing "special" childhood relationships. In a retrospective sense, nostalgia was an important factor, representing an abstract, yet powerful image of the early experiences. The feelings that were associated with the outdoor experiences played a role in encouraging some women to return to the outdoor world, yet more importantly, nostalgia had an impact in its own right; it was an abstract, yet important manifestation of the early years.

Secondary Aim

The secondary aim of my study was to analyze three themes that related to the Guiding experiences. These included the dimensions of experience and aspiration, leadership and certification, and the female factor. These were primarily concerned with discovering how the factors specific to Guiding affected the nature of the early experiences.

Dimensions of experience and aspiration

The extent to which women's participation was limited or encouraged by Guiding was difficult to answer in view of the subjective interpretations of the Guiding experiences. Guiding emphasised outdoor living rather than technical mastery, and the meanings derived from the experiences reflected this emphasis. Women's subsequent participation was thus carried out within the framework of the Guiding experience because this was how the outdoor world was defined and rationalised.

Although women exuded the confidence that "I can do anything", the reality of their participation and aspirations indicated that there were boundaries that they were not willing to venture into, and the reasons were identified in terms of personal characteristics. The recourse to the personal was often followed by the comment that "I know a Guide who does....", thus distancing the organization from any limiting preconceptions.

The issue of limits did provide an important insight into how women extend their horizons in the outdoor world. The crucial factor relied on access to either individuals or agencies that could provide entrance into new avenues of experiences. Financial resources and the time to undertake these activities were necessary factors, and identify some of the structural constraints that were faced by other women.

Leadership and certification

Badges, leadership experiences and certification played a minor role in the early years. The outdoors were a domain controlled by Guiders, with leadership opportunities kept to a minimum. Adult leadership and certification, however, made an enormous impact. Adult leadership provided women with a site to undertake activity, and acknowledged expertise via the certification process. The social network of Guide leaders provided access to other women with an interest in the outdoors, and opened up an avenue of participation that existed beyond both the family sphere and Guiding. The network also represented an agency of support and inspired lifelong friendships. Although adult leadership experiences were often initiated because of a daughter's involvement, the attachment to the organization made a transition to a personal involvement, and "nothing to do with the family".

The influence of Guide leaders was extremely mixed, with an equivalent number of positive and negative experiences. Leaders were seldom seen as women to emulate, or described as "role models". They were any combination of strict, nice, supportive, and harsh. The most common recollections related to how leaders had acted in an advisory capacity, encouraging individual growth and development rather than representing an image to emulate. It seems that the most positive impact of adult leaders was to be one.

The female factor

One of the most informative factors of this study related to the single-sex nature of the experiences, and the manner in which this was regarded as a crucial aspect of the organization. Across the generations, women stressed that they would not have participated in the outdoor component if it had been a co-ed environment. This was one of the few arenas where the Not-impressed were in agreement with the rest of the groups. As a boyless space, the opportunities were there for girls to flourish without intimidation or disruption. The "girls only" environment nurtured competence and self-confidence, providing the time and space to succeed.

The experiences of co-ed outdoor situations proved to have been very negative for some women. Within the mixed situation, the tasks at camp were gendered, with women in control of the domestic sphere. This was a source of conflict for some women, and was seldom resolved due to either intimidation or the feeling that "it's not worth the effort". The family situation was also the site of gendered tasks, although this did not create the conflict and frustration evident with other groups. The distribution of labour was recognized as "just the way it is".

Implications for Guiding

There is no question that for those women who had positive Guiding experiences, the impact of these was often enormous. Although the twenty women were not a representative sample, they acknowledge how important the organization can be in women's lives. The complete absence of any documentation of such experiences is astounding considering the size of the organization and its lengthy history. This study merely scratches the surface, and paves the way for further scholarship.

I have a number of questions that indicate areas of further exploration within the organization:

1. Where do the girls go if they wish to experience different outdoor activities that Guiding is not able to offer?
2. How many girls leave the organization because it isn't "cool"? Do they pursue outdoor experiences with other agencies?
3. How does adult leadership influence women who volunteer for short periods of time? Do these experiences encourage them to participate in the outdoors at a later stage.
4. How does the adult experience inform a woman's identity? Does this change with the transition from her position as a parent leader, to that of her own leisure activity?
5. What is the nature of the Guide/leader relationship in the broader context of the program as a whole. The role model concept would appear to be inappropriate from this study, suggesting that the relationships are far more complex and subjective.

Implications for Girls and Women's Outdoor Participation

At a personal level, the research provided some extremely useful information which prompted the following questions:

1. Is it time to reconceptualize how the outdoor world perceives the concepts of "non-traditional" and "gender"? Humberstone recognises adventure education as "an

immensely powerful, largely unrecognised medium through which particular ideologies may be reproduced or challenged" (1987, p.29). The challenges up till now have been located within girls' participation in the "male" domain of adventure pursuits, however, the division of labour continues to be reproduced within the arena of outdoor living. This issue needs to be addressed, otherwise the conflicts that were experienced will continue, the inevitability of sitting back and "not making a fuss" grounding the very social relations that are challenged in the active pursuits. This is an extremely complex issue when one considers the contradictory subject positions that women occupy in the context of the family camp, Guide activities and personal leisure.

2. To what extent should outdoor programs reconsider their approach to outdoor living? This study identifies the positive side of the experience in providing girls and women with the skills necessary to pursue activities in later years. Should this be a goal?

3. How can a level of competence be encouraged in short-term experiences, sufficient to provide girls and women with the skills necessary to pursue activities on their own?

4. How do women define "risk" related activities? Also, what images of the physical self are encouraged through such activity? How do we encourage girls to believe in the strengths and abilities of their bodies?

5. To what extent should an outdoor experience be fun? The emphasis on character development, personal and social education seem to obscure what women in this study identified as a very positive factor of the experience: enjoyment.

And me...

After committing my mental energies to the exploration of Guiding experiences for over a year, I am going to come full circle to where I was in order to recognize where I am going! As I mentioned in Chapter 2, my original perceptions of Guiding were not overly flattering, and were influenced to a certain extent by years of media misinformation. I had absolutely no idea what Guiding was all about.

Over the course of the research period, friends have howled with laughter when they discovered the topic of my research. The jokes about Girl Guide cookies are wearing thin. I have had to justify the nature of this research on more than one occasion. Comments have been made about creating a title that obscures the subject matter. This is all consciousness-raising that I did not expect. It seems that the veil of prejudice is very widely spread across the Commonwealth.

As I sit here many months later, I can honestly say that my opinions have changed. After spending hours listening to women's experiences, it is impossible to ignore the enormous impact that the teenage and adult years of Guiding had on some women's lives. It may not be "cool", but it played an important part in providing the space and time to develop personal and physical identity in a "safe" environment.

Times are changing. In both America and Canada, there are proposals to change the Guides laws, aspects of the organization that have been maintained over the eighty-four years (Brady, 1993; Edmonton Journal, 1993). The organization is being politicized through challenges to its single-sex policy. The recent international camp in Ontario discussed issues such as birth control, date rape, and employment equity; "The Girl Guides have become a launchpad for feminism" (Brady,1993, p.50). The changes are responding to the needs of girls and women in a society that continues to discriminate on the basis of gender. This is

a positive activism that reaches millions of girls worldwide. Camping and the outdoors play a significant role, and as such have provided a useful insight into a segment of the overall Guiding experience.

My conclusion: There is still much to be learned.

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Appendix 1

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS USING WORDPERFECT

The coding and sorting of interview data is actually quite straightforward. This is the idiot's guide to using Wordperfect to do what is basically a cut and paste job without getting glue everywhere....

1. Widen the margins on the left hand side of the transcript (approx 3 or 4 inches will do).

2. Number your lines: Shift F8,1,5.

3. Print off a copy of the transcript.

4. Go through and code the data. The wide margins provide plenty of room for scribblings. The easiest way to do this is to take each paragraph at a time and create a code that you feel the content describes. Do not worry about creating too many codes. When you name a code, create a six or seven letter word that is not a standard dictionary term, but can be recognised easily. Abbreviations are useful in this instance eg: Single sex organization becomes SSORG; personal politics becomes PPOLIT....

The next stage is to get back on the computer. All you are going to do is some electronic cutting and pasting. The task is to append the coded sections to different files, ie, all the pieces of text that relate to SSORG are listed in a file that is given that name. The beauty of this system is that you do not have to create a file prior to appending. The command that you use will create the file as you go so to speak.

What you need to do is devise a system that allows you to know immediately from which interview, and where in the transcript the text has come (the appended document does not show the line numbering). So.. go through the transcript on the computer, and place the code, the line number and the participant identification code (I used letters) in the wide margin. It should end up looking something like this:

I501TIMES In the 50s, girls in those days, you were supposed to act like ladies...
I502SSORG especially around adults and boys. If you were a whole group of girls
I502IDNTTY you didn't have to act like a lady. You could just turn cartwheels and climb trees, I doubt if I would have climbed trees with a bunch of boys standing round. I think our words, our actions would have been restricted because we would have been expected to conduct ourselves as a lady. Without the boys we didn't have to.

Once you have done this, to append a section of coded data to a file, first block off the particular section (F12) making sure you include the code and identification, then using Ctrl F4,1,4, the blocked text will be appended to the file you select.

When you are appending to the various files, it is worth doing this on the hard drive because not only is it quicker, but it also means you don't have to worry about which disks you are using, how full they are and so on. You can save onto back up discs once you have completed coding each transcript.